

https://dspace.org/

The aims of religious education in Lesotho

Ramahadi, Evangeline Dineo

2015
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/18105

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

T H E A I M S O F R E L I G I O U S E D U C A T I O N I N L E S O T H O

Evangeline Dineo Ramahadi

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Education
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
for the Degree of Master of Education

Johannesburg 1987

A B S T R A C T

This dissertation attempts to identify the aims of Religious Education in Lesotho secondary schools.

The time of missionary enterprise in the Nineteenth Century has been followed in the second half of the Twentieth Century by dynamic political and socio-economic change. This period is marked by considerable uncertainty about the aims of religious education.

This is a descriptive study, and uses relevant literature to find what could be acceptable, appropriate aims for the teaching of religion in Lesotho.

Chapters 1 to 4 establish that the more common but questionable aims of religious instruction in Lesotho secondary schools can be traced back to the era of evangelization in the last century. A review of the literature follows.

In Chapters 5 and 6 the idea of conversion and morality as the aims of religious education is dismissed, leaving Education as the only possible aim.

The climax, in Chapter 7, presents the opposing views of writers on religious education on the issue: Can religion be taught as part of education or not? Has it a place in the school curriculum? The debate arises from this discussion.

In support of its argument, this study draws much from the concept of education as described by R. S. Peters, and P. H. Hirst. It concludes that religious studies can be educational despite religion's epistemic problem.

With Lesotho's educational situation in view, the study selects the medial, instructional aims which can contribute toward the attainment of this primary and general aim, namely Education.

D E C L A R A T I O N

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Evangeline D. Ramakadi

13th day of October, 1987.

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	(ii)
PREFACE	(vii)
INTRODUCTION	(ix)
Scope and Purpose	(ix)
Previous Work in this Field	(x)
Aims in Teaching	(xii)
Method and Procedure	(xiii)
PART I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
CHAPTER 1 The Origins of Missionary Work in Lesotho	1
A. The French Protestant Mission	1
B. The Catholic Mission	12
C. The Anglican Mission	20
D. Summary and Comment	26
CHAPTER 2 Disputes between the Church Denominations	28
A. Doctrine: Christ the Mediator	30
B. Church Ministry and Discipline	32
C. The Bible	37
D. Summary and Comment	39
CHAPTER 3 Rivalry between the Church Denominations	41
A. Significant Experiences allegedly confirming God's Favour	41
B. Expressed Feelings of Rivalry	44
C. Rivalry in Action	48
D. Summary and Comment	54
CHAPTER 4 The Traditional Major Aims of Religious Education	55
A. Conversion	56
B. Moral Behaviour	60
C. The Educational Aim	63
D. The Present Situation	66

PART II: DISCUSSION OF THE AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY WRITING ON THIS TOPIC 70

CHAPTER 5 Conversion as the Aim of Religious Education..... 70

A. Writers who maintain that Religious Education should aim primarily at conversion, but avoid coercion..... 70

B. Writers who are opposed to conversion as the aim of Religious Education..... 76

C. Comment..... 81

CHAPTER 6 Morality as the Aim of Religious Education..... 85

A. The view that Religious Education and Morality are intimately related, hence to aim primarily at moral conduct is expected and characteristic of Religious Education..... 85

B. The view that Religion provides a good support for morality, but Religious Education does not aim primarily at moral education..... 90

C. The view that Religious Education and Morality are independent of each other; Religious Education must not have moral behaviour as its principal aim..... 92

D. A Critique..... 95

CHAPTER 7 Education as the Aim of Religious Education..... 104

A. The Concept of 'Education' 104

B. Opposing Views on Religious Education..... 108

C. This Study's Argument..... 117

D. Summary and Conclusion..... 122

PART III: A DEFENCE OF A PARTICULAR SET OF AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN LESOTHO 123

CHAPTER 8 The Selection of Aims for Lesotho..... 123

A. The Nature of the Discipline..... 123

B. The Situation in Lesotho..... 127

C. The Implications for Religious Education in Lesotho..... 136

Summary..... 139

CHAPTER 9 Defence of Selected Aims..... 140

A. A moderate phenomenological approach..... 140

B. A set of objectives for Religious Education in Lesotho..... 144

C. Awareness of the relevance of religious material to life experience..... 149

D. The ability to see the relationship between the different parts and events in the text.... 151

E. The ability to use critical thinking and judgement..... 156

CHAPTER 10 Recommendations..... 162

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 177

P R E F A C E

This study is designed to shed some light on the issue of the aim of Religious Education at Secondary Schools in Lesotho. It seeks to find a helpful approach to the subject at this level..

The writer's fifteen years experience in teaching religion, and subjects such as Sotho, Geography and Mathematics, has made clear how the teaching of religion compares with that of other subjects. She has had contact with many teachers of religion at annual meetings and workshops, and it is the discussion at such gatherings that has given rise to this investigation. For two successive years she marked external examination scripts, and has twice acted as moderator. These activities were the inspiration for an in-depth examination into Religious Education.

The contribution of other people must be acknowledged. Thanks are extended to Rev. Father Denis Fahy, Head of the Theology Department at the University of Lesotho, for his never failing encouragement and interest. He provided copies of minutes and reports of meetings of the Regional Panel for Religious Education.

The librarians of the National University of Lesotho, and of the Oblate Scholasticate in Roma, and of the Mazenod Oblate Centre, deserve special mention for their help in affording me access to important documents and reports.

The writer is also indebted to the assistants at the Morija Book Depot, and at the Anglican Centre in Maseru for their help in gaining access to documents and books concerning the life and work of early missionaries.

Sister Mary Jo Hannon of the Holy Family Congregation lent me an invaluable document - Livre D'Or - a book containing articles written by some of the most outstanding among the French Protestant missionaries. This book is almost unobtainable as it was printed in a very limited edition to mark the mission's Golden Jubilee. I am very grateful to Sr. Mary Jo.

I thank Professor P. Enslin and Dr. H. Summers for their efficient supervision of my work. They were always available whenever help was required.

The dissertation was typed by Mrs. Joan Doyle. The enthusiasm, talent and experience she brought to the task was remarkable.

This work owes a great deal to the people mentioned here, but none of them are to blame for the weaknesses in it.

INTRODUCTION

Scope and Purpose:

In Lesotho, at present, 'Religious Education' and 'Religious Knowledge' are used interchangeably, as a subject name for religious instruction at post primary school level.

This dissertation is concerned with the Junior Certificate level in the secondary school.[1] Religious Education is usually offered as an examination subject at this level. As in all countries in Southern Africa, and even more than in any of these, Christianity holds sway in Lesotho, and is, practically, the only religion taught in schools. Thus, in the context of Lesotho, 'Religious Education' means 'Christian Education'. This fact determines the scope of this study considerably. Though it envisages a wider perspective with regard to religion, it must necessarily be based mostly on the Christian religion. Religious Education at secondary school level in Lesotho is what the study is concerned with.

There is, apparently, much uncertainty, and some confusion among teachers, as to what religious education at secondary school is meant for. With a background of an energetic sectarian evangelization since 1833 to 1960, approximately, followed by rapid and dynamic political and socio-economic changes, among other things, the teaching of religion seems to have reached the cross roads, and tends to lose its bearings. The current syllabus, based on selected passages from the Bible, gives but one general aim: "to teach salvation History", and nothing else.

---

1 The Junior Certificate Level (Standards 7 - 9) is, in fact, what is generally understood as secondary school in Lesotho. The higher level prior to University is called high school.

Thus up to the present moment the different church denominations can still, and do pursue their respective sectarian aims through religious instruction in secondary schools; hence the confusion.

This makes it necessary to clarify, and formulate the aims of Religious Education. This dissertation is an attempt to arrive at a more reasonable and precise formulation of the aims of Religious Education at Secondary School level in Lesotho.

Previous Work in this field:

Unfortunately, there isn't any research concerned directly with the aims of religious education in Lesotho. The paucity of research studies in religious education, not only in Lesotho but also in the neighbouring countries has been a drawback in this undertaking; so much that the study could not overlook the little information available from a few unpublished research studies. Although these are concerned only indirectly with aims of religious education, and despite certain weaknesses in some of them, their findings confirm the existence of the problem that the present study intends to investigate, and attempt its solution.

Thus, Dlamini, T. (1974), a research study which uses a Junior Certificate Religious Knowledge examination paper as a criterion instrument with the purpose to enquire into differences in achievement in Religious Knowledge at four Swaziland Schools, Dlamini finds out that a considerable number of students show lack of basic knowledge; for instance, that the Old Testament is related to, and forms a link with the New Testament. This shows that learning activities necessary for attaining this objective were not given sufficient emphasis.

A similar clue has been provided by Ngara, B. (1981). It is a comparative study that seeks to compare Scriptural Knowledge and Eucharistic Knowledge in certain secondary

schools in Lesotho. It used a knowledge test prepared for this purpose. Some of its findings and recommendations show that important areas of learning are not always given adequate emphasis.

Malie, E. (1967): Though it concerns the teaching of history in the Bantu Secondary Schools of the Southern Transvaal region, Malie's work was found useful for it is concerned with the teaching of history to African children, and contains considerable material on the aims of history teaching, some of which coincide more or less with religious education aims. For example, Malie's study stresses the importance of situational teaching involving the inclusion of more African Heroes, so as to make history more meaningful to the African child. He also lays much stress on chronology and on moral lessons in history study. Malie used no test instrument or questionaire, but based his research study on discussions with teachers in different schools.

This study also consulted a research study conducted in England by Loukes, H. (1965), which is contained in his book entitled New Grounds in Christian Education. In this research, Loukes wanted to find out whether religious education in the secondary schools in Britain was achieving anything. He used questions based on the Bible as a criterion test. His finding was that what he supposed to be the most basic aim, namely factual knowledge of the Scripture content, had not been attained. Most of the students comprising his sample showed appaling ignorance of the events described in the Bible and of their chronological order.

Thus all the above research studies, while facing the problem from slightly different angles, either show or imply that something important has not been achieved in religious education, hence the need to be certain about its aims.

Official Reports. Relevant educational reports from the Ministry of Education in Lesotho shed even more light on the problem. Some of the reports, especially external examination reports, showed clearly which areas examiners thought had received sufficient emphasis in the teaching-learning process, and which areas have, apparently, been overlooked.

Teachers' Meetings. Reports from important meetings of Religious Education teachers, and the discussions at these meetings have made it even more clear than written documents that teachers who are engaged in religious education in Lesotho have problems, and the most serious among those problems is the inability to sort out what religious education should primarily be aiming at, in the secondary school.

Aims in teaching:

A question about aims is a way to look for a more precise specification of what an undertaking or activity is. A clarification of aims is a means of getting the mind clear on what is being done. It also carries the suggestion that there is an attempt to achieve something that might be missed because of the difficulty involved in the task. Aims are an attempt to specify more accurately the qualities, or abilities we think more desirable to develop. It is essential for the teacher to be clear about his aims, otherwise he will not have criteria by reference to which he can determine satisfactorily the content and method of his teaching.

According to some writers, the words 'aim' and 'objective' mean more or less the same thing, and can be used interchangeably. It is noticeable, however, that 'objective' is often used where 'aim' would have been used in the not so distant past.

P. H. Hirst sees 'objective' as more technical than 'aim'. He says that in common parlance and educational debate

both 'aims' and'objectives' can have varying degrees of specificity.[2] After warning that people gain nothing by trying to legislate particular uses for these terms, he points out that it should be borne in mind, nowever, that educationally, the greater the degree of specificity, the better. Thus the usual use of 'aims' when referring to more general goals, and of 'objectives' for more specific, instructional goals.

These aims, objectives or goals are defined educationally as descriptions of the ways in which students will have changed during, or by the end of the course, or the content unit. The changes may be new ways of thinking and feeling about the events which comprise the unit topic. From a cursory survey of the objectives in Bloom's classification[2] it could be said that objectives are, above all, developments of a person, and primarily developments of a rational mind.

While objectives may be cognitive or affective, involving emotions, they are usually more involved in the acquisition of knowledge. Thus objectives other than knowledge itself seem to be intelligible in character only in relation to the acquisition of knowledge. For this reason, skill, character development and other such objectives are what they are, in part, because of the cognitive elements they necessarily involve. In the same way, having a critical attitude, or an adaptable nature that is prepared to accept social change, is dependant on possessing some degree of relevant knowledge.

Method and Procedure

This is a descriptive study, and uses a descriptive survey method. To attain its objective, the study makes investigation of literature on religious education, and also uses reports and records related to the problem the study attempts to resolve.

---

2 Hirst, P. 1974

3 Bloom, B. et al. 1956

Part I

The uncertainty with regard to aims can be seen more clearly, and its impact assessed more or less correctly against the background of the missionary period. The kind of Christianity introduced in Lesotho during that initial period was not oriented towards a unified purpose. For this reason, the first four chapters, (Part I of this study), describe the missionary enterprise in Lesotho. This background is meant to demonstrate that the present must have been shaped, at least partly, by the past. It is also used to show that unless those who teach religion are agreed on what religious education is meant to achieve, there could always be as many principal aims for religious education as there are church denominations.

It can be argued that in many cases the present is not necessarily the result of what conditions were in the past. Furthermore, succeeding generations quite often make attempts to keep the good and discard what is bad from all that was inherited from the past. It should be remembered, however, that such a process of sifting and discarding takes a long time, even centuries, especially when it concerns matters such as religion or political ideologies. These are not changed overnight.

It is not easy to change what has long been regarded, by many, as part of the creed, just as it takes time, and self discipline, to be indifferent with regard to the status quo. Thus many errors from the past are often left to die a natural death. However, much harm could be done in the meantime. In Lesotho for instance, about 95 per cent of the schools belong to church denominations. While these church schools are government aided, and are supposed to open their doors to all children irrespective of their church membership, many teachers ignore this fact when it comes to teaching religion. They teach it as though all the children in the class belong to the school denomination.

Part II

Part II is an attempt to find, from literature on religious education, the opinion of writers on the aims of Religious Education. It is a review of literature for enlightenment on this issue. The procedure is determined, not only by the historical background in Part I, but also by the apparent uncertainty with regard to aims, and a lack of unified purpose among Religious Education teachers.

The study's purpose in this section is to search out for an aim, or aims, that seem most appropriate for Religious Education.

Part III

This part deals with a selection of aims for religious education in Lesotho. The selection is based on deductions from reviewed literature, but also takes into account the demands of the situation in Lesotho.

Thus the whole idea behind this study is that uncertainty with regard to direction and a lack of unity with regard to the purpose of teaching religion is something that needs to be recognised wherever it obtains, and that something must be done about it, for it presents a serious problem. As some writers have observed, the difference between what appears in the syllabus, and what actually goes on in the classroom is far greater than many educators are either aware of, or willing to admit.

To suggest aims is not to restrict the teacher, or to dictate to him as to how to go about his job. It is just a reminder to the teacher of what the discipline is supposed to achieve in the learner. An aim doesn't represent the process, but the end in view. Thus all activities in the classroom are left to the teacher's choice as long as they lead toward the desired goal. To accept an aim is to accept responsibility. It is also to choose between two options -between an unrewarding venture and a better alternative.

PART I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGINS OF MISSIONARY WORK IN LESOTHO

A. The French Protestant Mission

1. Tribal Wars and the Missionaries

The early history of Christianity in Lesotho or that of Religious Education, cannot be studied apart from the history of Lesotho, or apart from Moshoeshoe I, the founder and chief of the Basotho nation.

Moshoeshoe was ambitious and did not hide the fact that he had an aspiration to become a great and powerful king. He succeeded in gathering many people, mostly refugees, about him, partly through the advice he got from Mohlomi [1] and partly by his own initiative and prudence. He was full of hopes for the future, and looked forward to a period of peace and prosperity during which there would be no more tribal wars and his chiefdom would steadily increase. These hopes were to be disappointed. Reports of approaching attack from various neighbouring communities reached him.

The attacking marauders were Kora, or Korana, a branch of the Khoikhoi, the people who had occupied the Cape before the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, but who had been pushed further and further inland by the advance of European settlers. The Kora, with their horses and guns from the Colony, were able to raid the chiefdoms of the interior. They were not always successful, but the overall losses which they inflicted were heavy.[2]

---

1 Ellenberger, D. History of the Basuto, Ancient and Modern. London: J.C.Macgregor, 1912.pp.95,96. Muller, C. Five Hundred Years - A History of Southern Africa. Pretoria. 1968. p.443

2 Sanders, P. Moshoeshoe, Chief of the Sotho. London: Heinemann, 1975. p.44

Another threat was the approach of some of Mzilikazi's Ndebele regiments. These made their advance and attacked the Basotho, but were repulsed.[3] In the winter of 1831 one of the bands of the Kora burst in upon the stronghold of Makhabane, Moshoeshoe's brother, at Ntlo-Kholo, and captured most of his herds.[4] Moshoeshoe attempted to appease them with a payment of cattle, 'nyehelo', but instead of showing mercy, the Kora responded by killing some of his messengers.[5]

Towards the end of 1832, an emancipated slave, Adam Krotz, had come to the Caledon Valley on a hunting expedition. Moshoeshoe invited him to his home at Thaba-Bosiu. According to Casalis, Moshoeshoe told Adam Krotz about the incessant attacks and asked if he could give him some advice. Krotz thought of the missionaries and tried to make Moshoeshoe understand the services which such men could render him.[6] Moshoeshoe was impressed and expressed a wish to have them at once, and begged Krotz to tell the first missionary he met to hasten to his country.[7]

Shortly after his return home Krotz found that Moshoeshoe had sent him two hundred head of cattle to make sure that he would have the means of fulfilling his request. Unfortunately the cattle had been intercepted and captured by the Korenas on the way.[8]

According to Nehemiah Moshoeshoe[9], Adam Krotz had on the same occasion of his visit to Thaba-Bosiu, sold Moshoeshoe three guns at fifty head of oxen apiece. This shows that for

---

3 Sanders, P. (1975) p.45
4 Ibid
5 Ibid
6 Casalis, E. My Life in Basutoland. Tr.J. Brierley 1889. pp. 137-138
7 Ibid
8 Ibid and Ellenberger, V. Landmarks in the Story of the French Protestant Church in Basutoland during the One Hundred Years of its Existence, 1833-1933. Morija, 1933. p.5
9 Sanders, P. (1975) p.47

Moshoeshoe, at that time of his life at least, a request for a missionary and the acquisition of firearms served but one immediate aim - the end of oppression by the Korana.[10]

Although Moshoeshoe's cattle were waylaid, his appeal for assistance was carried out. Krotz passed it to Kolbe, his missionary at Philippolis, who in turn passed it on to Dr. Philip, the superintendent of the London Missionary Society in South Africa.

In February 1833 two young French missionaries, Rev. Eugene Casalis and Rev. Thomas Arbousset, accompanied by their carpenter assistant, Constant Goselin, disembarked at Cape Town and were lodged in Dr. Philip's house. They had been sent out by the Paris Evangelical Mission Society to join their colleagues - Rolland, Lemue and Pellissier beyond the Vaal, but were distressed to learn that the threats of Mzilikazi and his followers had made this inadvisable. When they reached Philippolis and heard Adam Krotz's message, they felt they were being called to Lesotho.

Moshoeshoe was overjoyed to see the missionaries. He showed them the devastation caused by the wars, told them that they were very welcome and that the country was at their disposal.[11] This kind welcome won Casalis over completely. Having looked about and decided that the supply of water near Thaba Bosiu was insufficient the missionaries chose a site some thirty kilometres to the South West and there they founded the station of Morija, which was to become the centre of the P.E.M.S. (Paris Evangelical Mission Society) in Lesotho. Moshoeshoe kept his promise and sent some of his sons and a considerable number of his people to assist them and to live with them.[12]

---

10 Laydevant, F. Bophelo ba Morena Nathanael Griffiths Lerotholi. Mazenod. 1953. p.42
Sanders, P. Ibid. p.126.

11 Casalis, E. Mes Souvenirs. Paris. P.S.M.E. 1922.p.219.

12 Becker, P. Hill of Destiny - The Life and Times of Moshoeshoe, Founder of the Basotho. London. Longman. 1969. p.269.

Right from the start, the missionaries' aim was to effect the conversion of the Basotho. Consequently their original plan was to establish a Christian Reserve - an area owned and controlled by the mission, where they could gather around them a community which they could imbue with Christian ideals, and through it convert the whole country.[13] It was part of the scheme, if not the most important part, that the Chief himself should come and live with them. He did, after some months, prepare to migrate to the mission station.[14] The plan of the new village was marked out, and the place for his residence was set apart. Families began to move their dwellings from Thaba-Bosiu to Morija.[15] 'It is a triumph' exclaimed Arbousset in his report, 'thus God crowns the faith of his servants.' [16] This idea of, and striving for, a national church, is mentioned by prominent P.E.M.S. writers. [17]

However the project did not materialize, and the migration was never completed. According to Casalis, the reason for this was the sudden death of Moshoeshoe's senior wife, 'Mamohato. The resultant ceremonies totally diverted his attention.[18] This disappointment did not check the zeal of those missionaries. They laboured and struggled to found the church known today as the Lesotho Evangelical Church (L.E.C.), formerly called P.E.M.S.

---

13 Jacottet, E. 'Histoire de la Mission du Lessouto' in Livre D'or. 1912. pp 243-244.
Sanders, P. Ibid. p.49

14 Ibid

15 Ibid

16 Arbousset to P.E.M.S.Committee, 28 Jan, 1834. in J.M.E. 1834, pp. 292 - 298

17 Becker, P. Ibid. p.269
Jacottet, E. Ibid.
Ellenberger, V. Ibid. p.29

18 Casalis to P.E.M.S. Committee, 26 May, 1834 in J.M.E. 1835, p.36

Besides Morija, new mission stations were founded at Thaba-Bosiu and at Mekoatleng in 1834.

As early as 1834 the French Protestant missionaries had already drawn maps of the countries they had come to live in. That of Lesotho was drawn by Casalis.[19] By this map and the one drawn and published a little later by Rev. H. Dyke, it is obvious that, at that time, the country ruled by Moshoeshoe I extended on the north-west as far as Hebron, and included Thaba-Nchu and Imparani, near Ficksburg.[20] Hence the reason why the P.E.M.S. opened other new mission stations in or about these areas, on the West bank of the Caledon River.

2. Means and Methods of Evangelization used by the first P.E.M.S. Missionaries in Lesotho:

(i) Friendship and Encouragement

Both Arbousset and Casalis were men of great integrity and ability. This is evident from their role in the history of Lesotho at the time and during their sojourn in the country.[21] They were utterly devoted to the welfare of the Basotho, even though they disregarded their culture in religious matters. This interest in the welfare of the people won the hearts of the pagans to the faith. With Casalis, Moshoeshoe I came to be on terms of almost complete understanding. This fact is well illustrated in Casalis' book, Mes Souvenirs (1938).

Highly intelligent and wonderfully sympathetic, Casalis won Moshoeshoe's favour and attracted him to Christianity so much that he turned away from almost all Sotho customs except polygamy. He became Moshoeshoe's chief adviser

---

19 Ellenberger, V. Ibid. p.8 plus footnote.

20 Ibid, and Sanders, P. Ibid pp. 113-114, and Smith, E. The Mabilles of Basutoland. London. Hodder and Stoughton.1939. pp.39-40.

21 Theal, G. (Ed) Basutoland Records 1883.

in matters of government and general policy.[22] A brilliant linguist and a perceptive writer, most of Moshoeshoe's official letters were either drafted or translated by him. This explains, at least partly, why almost all of the first converts were members of Moshoeshoe's family and close relatives. The Chief himself was increasingly drawn towards Christianity. He attended Church services regularly and encouraged his people to follow his example. It was for this reason that the intention of the missionaries was to have the king as their next door neighbour at Morija. He would act as an influential friend. The plan, as stated earlier, did not succeed; instead Thaba-Bosiu, the king's residential area, became the second most important mission station.

(ii) Moving Sermons and Exhortations

It is reported that, after the initial indifference of the first years was overcome, the missionaries preached to large and attentive congregations, and that often services were interrupted by persons sobbing and crying aloud, distressed by their 'sinful condition', and their 'need for grace'. This crying remained a feature of the P.E.M.S. services for a considerable number of years.[23] Thus when Dr. Philip visited Lesotho in February 1842, he declared that he had never preached in the midst of emotions such as those at Thaba-Bosiu and Morija. At the former, his congregation was so moved that it burst into uncontrollable weeping. Casalis himself was so touched that he was unable to continue as interpreter, and it was impossible for the service to continue.[24]

Arbousset was unconventional when he preached. One Sunday he carried a basket of grain into the pulpit.

---

22 Theal, G. Ibid

23 Sanders, P. Ibid. pp 123-124.
Ferragne, M. Le Pere Gerard Nous Parle. Roma. 1969. Vol.2 p.34.

24 Dr. Philip's letter 7th March 1842, plus editorial footnote. J.M.E. 1843. p.53

Announcing his text, 'Behold the sower went forth to sow' he punctuated his discourse by hurling handfuls of grain into the faces of his hearers. Some fell by the wayside' - swish! 'Other fell on the rocky ground' - Swish! 'And other fell among thorns' - Swish! The Basotho did not forget that sermon; thirty years later they still spoke of it.[25]

(iii) Evangelization of the Basotho by the Basotho themselves

The French Protestant missionaries realized, from the very beginning, that the evangelization of the Basotho would effectively be carried out, sooner or later, by the Basotho, for they knew and understood their own people better. Prominent among those far-sighted men were Arbousset and Mabille. It was Arbousset who first arranged for a thorough training of a small group of Christians from different villages, who were, in turn, to impart the Christian faith to their fellow villagers.[26]

This feature of the French Protestant missionary campaign had a related aspect - decentralization. Arbousset also formed a sort of evangelization society, a legion of preachers, from among the members of the Morija church who possessed horses. The villages, nearly two hundred in the district, were divided into groups, and these were distributed among the legionaries, who pledged themselves to visit them regularly, preach the Gospel, and circulate books among those who were able to read.

Like Arbousset, Mabille saw clearly that if Lesotho was ever to become Christian, the Basotho must take a hand, and ultimately a leading hand, in making it such. After planting native evangelists in many of the

---

25 Smith, E. Ibid. p.118

26 Jacottet, E. Ibid. pp.213-214
Smith, E. Ibid. p.132

villages, Mabille looked further and saw that a native pastorate might be recruited from among the evangelists and teachers who were yet to be; and that these would need a further and thorough training. If this implied the placing of Basuto pastors on an equality with European missionaries in the pastoral office, and in the future government of the Church of Basutoland, Mabille was prepared to accept the position.[27] What the P.E.M.S. missionaries did achieve by effecting such measures proved that their judgement was right, and they were more advanced in this respect than the Catholics who came to the mission field in Lesotho later.[28]

(iv) Catechism Classes

Clavier often describes Arbousset as heading towards a distant village on horseback for a catechism class,[29] although most of the catechism classes were attended at Morija.[30] Casalis wrote, concerning the catechism:

> The time between the services was not lost. Men and women, old people and children, applied themselves to learning how to read by means of some spelling exercises and of the small catechism which we had had printed in the Cape Colony.(31)
>
> (Translated from the French)

---

27 Smith, E. Ibid. p.130

28 Richard, J. L'Experience de la Conversion Chez Les Basotho. Rome. Universita Gregoriana. 1977 Chap. 1.

29 Clavier, H. Thomas Arbousset, Recherche Historique sur son Milieu, sa Personnalita, son Œuvre Parallel avec Livingstone. Paris. 1965.

30 Ibid, and du Plessis, J. A History of Christian Missions in South Africa. London. Longmans Green and Co. 1911 p.197.
Casalis, E. Ibid, 1922. p.92.

31 Casalis, E. Les Bassoutos. 1859 Edn. pp 86-89

In fact, that catechism was the first booklet to be printed by the missionaries; and to have it printed they had to take the trouble to make the long tedious journey from Lesotho to the Cape.[32]

(v) Schools

Mabille laid more stress upon education by this means than any of his predecessors, and it was to assume large proportions in the future. In 1860, in its infancy, reading, writing, some Bible questions, or catechism and some singing was all the school could give. When he spoke about the main purpose of school education, Mabille stated:

> ... for it is there we must look for reinforcements for our churches. How can we do it otherwise than by an education which is planned and progressive...Once a good and solid education is given to the children of Christians, the pagans will come to feel the need of it for their own children - and then, what a victory! (33)

Referring to the training school in June, 1869, Smith notes that Mabille could say, then, that the school already had a name. Applications to enter came from all sides. Mabille was chiefly, though not exclusively, aiming at the preparation of a corps of evangelists.[34]

The establishment of schools, and particularly of the Bible School, necessitated the writing and translation of books, especially that of the Bible. Among the great missionary writers at this period in the history of Lesotho were Mabille, Rolland, Ellenberger, Martin, Cochet Duvoisin, who worked together to produce among other works, the translation of the Bible into Sesotho. This was, and always will be, considered as

---

32 Casalis, E. Mes Souvenirs.

33 Smith, E. Ibid. p.126.

34 Ibid. p.200

the crowning of their mission work, and the most effective method they had ever used. Christian churches in Lesotho, and in the whole of Southern Africa where Sotho is spoken, have been using that Sotho text until very recently, for a new translation of the Bible has now been completed.

The apparent weakening in the Basotho's attachment to their customs was seen as a corollary to the mission's advance. In one of his letters, Arbousset wrote: 'Circumcision was falling into disuse, polygamy was no longer so strong.'[35] This is supported by Casalis' statement that by 1847 Moshoeshoe himself appeared to be waiting for a little more advancement among his people in order to renounce ancient customs, and regulate his life and government by Christian laws.[36]

The effects of the mission's teaching were, however, far from being spread uniformly throughout the country. The main areas of its influence were Thaba-Bosiu, Morija and its environs, where, as a result of Arbousset's frequent tours, the surrounding villages were as much affected by his teaching as the mission station itself. Beersheba and Mekoatleng were also strong mission stations. Outside these four areas the new religion was still very weak.[37]

3. Christianity and the Political Situation

The French Peotestant Missionaries always got involved in the political struggles of Lesotho in one way or another, mainly because of the close friendship between their first missionaries and the Basotho chiefs. Mention has already been made of the special friendship between

---

35 Arbousset to P.E.M.S.Committee, 24 February,1843 in F.M.E. 1843. p. 370

36 Casalis, E. The Basuto. London 1861. p.116

37 Sanders, P. (1975) Ibid. p. 125
Ellenberger, V. (1938) Ibid. pp. 10-14

Casalis and Moshoeshoe I. It is partly for this reason that, as mentioned on page 1, it is almost impossible to describe the course of Christianity in Lesotho without referring to certain events in the history of the country. Thus from 1843, when Sir G. Napier made a treaty with Moshoeshoe[38] until 1854, dark clouds gathered in the political sky. That is the time when strife began between Moshoeshoe and the Dutch settlers, the former basing his rights on his treaty with Sir.G. Napier, and the latter insisting on the right given to them by Moshoeshoe himself to settle in the contested territory, the so-called Orange River Sovereignity. This struggle ultimately led to the drawing of the Warden Boundary, by which Moshoeshoe lost his territory west of the Caledon. This struggle, and the resultant wars, were disastrous to the work of the missionaries. They found themselves in a delicate position, being suspected by the Basotho of connivance with the White enemies of their nation, and by the Whites as supporting and even helping the Basotho against them.[39]

The Basotho's revulsion against the Government of the Cape was resulting in a widespread turning away from the Church. Many of them had fondly imagined that the British were all practising Christians, and had looked up to Warden and Smith as potential benefactors. Now the myth had been destroyed and they were disappointed and disgusted with the British and with 'their religion' alike.[40] There was a revival of Sotho customs, led by some of the very chiefs who had previously been outstanding for their Christian piety and fervour, such as Mopeli, Molapo, Masopha, Makhobalo and Sekhonyana.[41]

---

38 Becker, P. Ibid. p. 136

39 Ellenberger, V. (1938) Ibid. pp.12 - 13

40 Maeder to P.E.M.S.Committee 9 Jan 1850, Lettres de Maeder 1837-1863, P.E.M.S. Paris, Reports to Missionary Conference April 1850 in F.M.E. 1852 pp. 285.

41 Sanders, P. (1975) Ibid. p. 161.
Ellenberger, V. (1938) Ibid p. 13

The P.E.M.S. mission stations suffered great material losses; several of them, like Beersheba and Morija were attacked and burned by the Dutch commandos.[42]

Moshoeshoe continued to go to church, but his attachment to the mission was steadily weakening. In 1855 one of the strongest links that bound him was broken with the departure of Casalis. The man who replaced him, Theophile Jousse, was a zealous and devoted missionary, but he lacked the sympathetic understanding of his predecessor. He found more to condemn in the Chief than to admire.[43] Arbousset had to return to France for health reasons in 1861. This increased Moshoeshoe's sadness.

The most outstanding among the missionaries who replaced Casalis and Arbousset was Rev. Adolphe Mabille.

B. The Catholic Mission

1. Arrival of Bishop Allard and Fr. J. Gerard, O.M.I.

It was in January 1862 when Moshoeshoe I gave a warm, kindly welcome to two Roman Catholic missionaries, Bishop Allard and Fr. Gerard. The two men, originally from France, had been working for some years among the Zulus in Natal. They had come to ask Moshoeshoe for permission to begin missionary work in his country. The reply, according to Bishop Allard, was that he foresaw that their coming would be a cause of discontent to the Protestant missionaries, but that he was not of such a turn of mind as to allow himself to be influenced by their protests: he would, however, examine their request before making answer.[44]

---

42 Arbousset to P.E.M.S. Committee 24 Feb.1843, in F.M.E. 1843, p.370.

43 Sanders, P. Ibid. p.270, plus footnote.

44 Allard's letter to his Superior General, Letter Book, No. 355. Original in French.

The answer, when it came, was favourable. The Catholics were given a mission site at Tloute. The Chief asked, in particular, that the new missionaries teach his people tailoring, and was delighted when they agreed.[45]

Several historians have weighed and have given explanations for Moshoeshoe's decision to allow Catholics into Lesotho:

Ellenberger, V. (1938) has stated that the French Protestant Missionaries had become too involved in politics and that Moshoeshoe drawn away from them to a large extent, and was not averse to fostering inimical feelings against them.[46]

Tylden, G. (1950) supports Ellenberger's view, and recalls the incident in which Mabille ordered his male converts to resist the call-up for military or police duties which their chief, Letsie, Moshoeshoe's eldest son, had instigated.[47]

Sanders, P. (1975) says Moshoeshoe had already had cause to critize the French Protestant missionaries for disregarding his authority and for behaving on occasion as if they themselves held temporal power; their carping disapproval of the stock thefts made him resentful.[48]

Whatever his reasons, Moshoeshoe encouraged and helped the Catholics to establish themselves in the Tloutle Valley, a good distance away from the P.E.M.S. mission stations, and put no obstacles in their way when they extended their work.

---

45 Lebreton, H. Litabanyana tsa Bophelo ba Kareke e Katholike Lesotho 1862-1874.Mazenod.1954.p.9

46 Ellenberger, V. A Century of Mission Work in Basutoland 1833-1933. Tr. from French by Ellenberger, E. Morija. 1938. pp.80, 130.

47 Tylden, G. The Rise of the Basuto. Cape Town. Juta & Co. 1950. pp.83-84

48 Sanders, P. Ibid. pp. 276-277.

> The king, in particular, a man who has profound judgement, has told us several times to invite him to our opening ceremony which he would attend personally and talk to his people in our favour.(49)(Translated from the French)

These words are not very different from those Moshoeshoe spoke to the P.E.M.S. missionaries on their arrival at Thaba-Bosiu.

> Each time you want to instruct us I shall be there to assemble my people and to see that they are attentive to what you say.(50)
> (Translated from the French)

The king did as he had promised. He was there on the day of the official opening and blessing of the Catholic Mission. He was accompanied by several of his sons and by a great number of horsemen. He had sent orders all over the country that men should come to the opening of the Catholic Mission on the appointed day. The Protestant ministers' fears were justified by one statement in the Chiefs discourse on the occasion, that 'the Basuto should try to find which is the true religion.'[51]

Up to this point the Basotho had the impression that the French Protestant Mission - the Paris Evangelical Mission Society - was the sole representative of the Christian religion all over the world. They then learnt, for the first time, that Christianity is a divided religion. This was to be both an embarrassment and an obstacle in the Basotho's understanding of Christianity. It would, more often than not, be identified with one of the church denominations.

---

49 Fr. Gerards letter to his Superior General March, 4th, 1864.

50 Casalis, E. (1922) Ibid. p. 259

51 Fr. Gerard's letter to his Superior General December 7th, 1865; also in Bishop Allard's Journal, November 1st, 1863.

2. Means and Methods of Evangelization used by the first Catholic Missionaries in Lesotho

(i) Visits

As the missionaries had been more than a year in Natal, Fr. Gerard spoke to the people in Zulu when he began his visits to the villages. During these visits he and the Bishop paid special attention to the needs of those who were very poor and neglected, the sick and the aged, who were often abandoned and left behind during raids.

Some two years later, in 1864, nuns of the Congregation of the Holy Family of Bordeaux arrived from France to help the mission. One of these, a nursing sister, always accompanied Fr. Gerard on his visits. Her work was to attend to the sick and to prescribe medicines which were often given free of charge.[52] Since then provision for remedies and for medicines (dispensaries) has always been a feature of the Catholic Mission stations in Lesotho.

Fr. Gerard has written the following in his Journal:

> Without doubt, charitable deeds achieve much more than words. We are tirelessly giving them remedies for their ailments. That touches their heart. (53)
> (Translated from the French)

(ii) Creation of a Christian milieu

The Catholic missionaries, like their countrymen, the French Protestant missionaries, had, at first, an idea of a Christian village as a way to evangelize and influence the Basotho pagans. A Christian village,

---

52 Fr. Gerard's Journal entry Oct, 31st, 1865, M.O.M.I. 1909, pp 94-97, and Voix du Basutoland, Vol. 18. No. 68. 1956. p.8.

53 Fr. Gerard's Journal entry March, 29th, 1865 in Ferragne, M. Ibid. p.22

it was thought, would ensure that the new converts lived according to their faith. A secluded locality, away from the rest of the people and their pagan customs would facilitate a Christian life style, and reduce the temptation to return to pagan customs.[54]

Accordingly, Bishop Allard, had, in 1864, asked Moshoeshoe for permission to establish a village set apart for Christians only. The Chief refused to give such a permission.[55] It was only in 1870, after the death of Moshoeshoe, and when the power of his successor had been curtailed - due to the establishment of British colonial rule, that the permission to have a Christian village was given by Mr. Bowker:

> I have received permission from Mr. Bowker to set up a Christian village on the opposite side of Motse-oa-Ma-Jesu (name of the first Catholic mission. (56)
> (Translated from the French)

Soon after permission was given huts were built, one after another, on the allocated site. The Christian village however, did not prove a successful device. Gradually the huts were abandoned by their owners and fell into ruin.[57] The project had failed. It was then that it became clear to the missionaries that it was socially and economically untenable. Thus the attempt to create a Christian milieu such as existed in France at that time, but on a small scale, was not the answer to the evangelization of Lesotho.

(iii) Liturgical Church Ceremonies

The early Catholic missionaries did not write much on the liturgy, and still less on its importance in evangelization. Yet it looks as if it was the liturgical

---

54 Lebreton, H. (1954) p.128.

55 Journal of Bishop Allard July, 10,1864. p.427 and Richard, J. (1977) p.57

56 Fr.Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne,M.(1969) p.89

57 Lebreton, H.(1954) p.128

celebrations that attracted the Basotho to the Catholic Church, especially at their first contact with it. In fact, the first Catholic convert in Lesotho was a young pagan woman who, when questioned, declared that her heart was touched by the sound of the organ at a Mass celebration in the Church at Motse-oa-Ma-Jesu.[58] In one of his journal entries Fr. Gerard highlights the beauty of ceremony in his description of the first baptismal celebration in the Catholic mission there. Even Moshoeshoe could not hide the fact that he had been much impressed.[59]

Ceremony has always been an important aspect of Sotho culture, hence its importance in their evangelization. It gives more meaning and importance to what would otherwise seem casual. It confirms what has been, or what is intended to be established in a person's life: an example from Sotho culture is the circumcision ritual. Besides, liturgy and ceremony, with the symbols they use, can be very educative in themselves. Fr.Gerard had stated in his journal:

> The Basuto, who already have some knowledge of the Scriptures were struck by the baptism ceremonies. They saw in them many resemblances with the Scripture contents: the gestures, the breathing on, etc. They remarked 'There's what resembles what Jesus taught.'(60) (Translated from the French)

(iv) The Catechism

The missionaries soon found it necessary to print a Catholic catechism in Sesotho.[61] It was for this

---

58 Lebreton, H. (1954) p.46.

59 Fr.Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne,M.(1969) p.38

60 Ibid p.32

61 Fr. Gerard's letter to the Superior General of the Oblates. November, 6th 1862

purpose that Bishop Allard went to Durban so as to be able to supervise the printing of the catechism personally.[62]

The word 'catechumenate' was used to refer to the period in which a neophyte spent learning the catechism. It could be six months, or two years, depending on individual needs and circumstances. The catechism method is generally known as the question and answer way of teaching doctrine, and learning is by memorization more often than not. Fr. Gerard has written as follows on this period of preparation:

> The catechumenate period is devoted to learning what has to be believed, to begin practising the Commandments, and to prayer...After some questioning on the catechism they recite the Creed aloud, then the Ten Commandments and the two principal prayers, the Our Father and the Hail Mary. (63) (Translated from the French)

(v) The Early Church Type of Instruction

In the Early Church the Divine Service was practically the only form of pastoral care.[64] Preaching was the ordinary means of instruction and was usually reserved for the Bishop.[65]

The Catholic missionaries, as well as the P.E.M.S. and the Anglicans who were to follow, used more or less the same form of instruction as was customary in the Early Church at the beginning of their mission work in Lesotho.[66]

---

62 St. George, H. Failure and Vindication. Journal of Bishop Allard,O.M.I. Durban. Unity Publications. 1981 p.429.

63 Fr.Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne,M.Ibid. p.99.

64 Carter,G. The Modern Challenge to Religious Education: God's Message and Our Response. New York. William Sadlier Inc. 1961. p.44.

65 Ibid.

66 St. George, H. Ibid. p.408.

It is said that before the printing of the catechism, and even many years after, instructional service at the Catholic mission consisted of assistance at Holy Mass and singing hymns. Scripture readings were followed by an instructional sermon, then questions on the subject of the sermon, after which the priest taught and explained one of the doctrines of the Church. This also invited more questions and explanations.[67] There was another short afternoon session which was mostly on doctrine, but also included the teaching of hymns. At the end of this afternoon session, those who wished remained for a short lesson in reading and writing.[68]

(vi) Retreats

According to Fr. Gerard's journal it seems that the main reason for the retreats he arranged for his converts was to give them further and more intensified instruction in the silent atmosphere of this period of reflection:

> The retreat has done so much good for the mission, that I have gained more clarity on the importance, the need for an instruction that is more solid, and not superficial.(69) (Translated from the French)

The journal describes a four day retreat he had for the first converts who were being prepared for receiving the Eucharist for the first time. During those four days most of the time was devoted to prayer and instruction.[70]

Apart from special retreats for those preparing to receive the sacraments, Baptism or the Eucharist, there were retreats for different groups in the Church, e.g. for adults, for youth, for school children etc.

---

67 Lebreton, H. (1954) p.28
68 Ibid.
69 Fr. Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne,M.(1969) p.52
70 Ibid. p.61.

The groups were treated and instructed according to what was felt they needed most as a group.[71] It was customary for the participants at these retreats to make a public renewal of their baptismal vows on the last day of the retreat, or at the close of this period of reflection.[72] This was to re-emphasize the purpose and the meaning of the retreat.

(vii) Schools

The first Catholic schools were established to meet the basic needs of the people. Gardening, sewing, cooking, mat-making and other related hand crafts featured high in these schools. They also served as a means of evangelization because of the importance they laid on the teaching of religion. It is through these schools that a considerable number of young converts were won to the Church's faith.[73]

C. The Anglican Mission

1. The Conditions in the Country:

The 1860's were a period of strife. The Dutch settlers were becoming too strong to resist any longer, and Moshoeshoe wished, more than ever before, to have missionaries from the Church of England. The P.E.M.S. missionaries had advised him to seek the help and protection of the British Government. His desire to have Anglican missionaries was, apparently, prompted by the need for protection and defence. He told Twells:

> I am thankful for all the French missionaries have done but France seems a long way off, and England quite near to us. I consider myself a child of the Queen, and wish to be under her, even as we are all under God...Now, if I have

---

71 Fr. Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne, M.(1969) p.99.

72 Ibid

73 Manuscript of Sister Marie Josef Argot.

> missionaries from England, it will be easier to prove my sincerity, and the state of affairs here will be more secure.(74)

Moshoeshoe actually asked for Anglican missionaries on at least three occasions - in 1850, when Bishop Grey of Cape Town visited the then Orange River Sovereignity;[75] in 1860 after his sons Tlabi and Tsèkelo had been educated at the Cape under the Bishop's auspices;[76] and in September 1863 when Bishop Edward Twells the newly appointed Bishop of Bloemfontein visited him at Thaba-Bosiu.[77] The hopes roused by these contacts remained unfulfilled for a long while, mainly because of the Anglicans commitments elsewhere,[78] but also because of the objections of the French Protestants, as can be seen from the following statement:

> The old Chief will be down on us for trying to deprive him of the missionaries of the Queen of England's Church. (79)

When the Anglicans decided to begin work in Lesotho in 1876, the Bishop of Bloemfontein asked for volunteers for the Lesotho mission from among his priests and the two who accepted the challenge were Rev. Fathers Widdicombe and Stenson.[80]

---

74 Twells Diary 26 Sept 1863 in:Orange Free State and Basuto Mission:Occasional Paper No.1 London 1864

75 Widdicombe, J. In the Lesuto. London.1891. p.79 .

76 Moshoeshoe to Grey 6 Dec,1860. D.24 U.S.P.G. Archives, London

77 Twells Diary. Ibid.

78 Widdicombe, J. Fourteen Years in Basutoland - A Sketch of African Mission Life. London. The Church Printing Co. 1891. p.70.

79 Dyke to Casalis 27 Jan, 1865. Letters 1864-65 P.E.M.S. Paris.

80 Dove, R. Anglican Pioneers in Lesotho. Some Account of the Diocese of Lesotho 1876 - 1930. Maseru. 1975. p.14
Widdicombe, J. (1891) p.72.

In his mandate to Fr. Widdicombe, the Bishop had laid down the terms within which the two missionaries were to work. These terms reveal the fact that he already knew, or had had some information concerning the situation prevailing in Lesotho at the time.[81] They were:

1. To keep aloof from politics, and not to take part in the 'pitsos' or public political meetings of the tribes.
2. Not to write letters of a public or political nature for any of the chiefs.
3. Not to identify the mission in any way with the government officials, lest the natives should think it to be a department of the Civil Service, and the missionaries paid or subsidized by the Queen, the Church of England being in their eyes 'the Church of the Queen of the English'.
4. To respect the labours of those missionaries already in the country, who in the present divided state of Christendom, were, unhappily, not in communion with our own branch of the Church.
5. To abstain entirely from controversy unless attacked, and to endeavour then to speak the truth in love, and in the spirit of meekness.
6. Not to receive into the communion of the Church, should they desire to enter it, Christians of other religious bodies under censure for evil conduct, or any whose motives for wishing to unite with us were not, as far as could be judged, pure and above reproach. (82)

2. Means and Methods of Evangelization used by the First Anglican Missionaries:

(i) Jesus Died for All

The Anglicans were the only mission in Lesotho at that time faced with a dual task: they had to convert the Basotho to Christianity, and also to take care of the

---

81 Dove, R. (1975) p.17

82 Widdicombe, J. (1891) p.75
Dove, R Ibid. pp. 16 - 17

needs of the few whites belonging to the Anglican Church. These, mainly officials and traders, had come to the country after it had been declared a British Colony in March, 1868.[83]

Widdicombe and Stenson were received with courtesy and kindness by Major Bell, and stayed with him until their new mission was sited.[84] The next day being Sunday the Major sent mounted messengers to the Europeans of the neighbourhood, announcing that the Anglican ministers had arrived and a service would be held.

Knowing only a few sentences in Sesotho, the ministers held services in English. Celebration of the Holy Eucherist was at the Residency. Incidentally, the Major's servant, who had been converted to the Anglican Church while in Natal, was present and received the Eucharist with the rest of the congregation. The presence of this black woman Widdicombe did not take just as a coincidence but as a blessing on, and clear indication of the feature of the English Church Mission in Lesotho.[85] The Anglican Church had, from the beginning of its establishment in Lesotho attracted itself to the people by its unsegregated services. Even Du Plessis (1911) who opposed the establishment of both the Catholic and the Anglican missions in Lesotho could state:

> In summing up the position of influence of Anglican missions in South Africa, it must be premised that the Anglicans, like the Wesleyans, draw no distinction between their European and their native membership.(87)

They could preach without the least embarrassment, 'Jesus died for all'.

---

83 Muller, C. Five Hundred Years - A History of South Africa. Pretoria. 1968. p.265.
Widdicombe, J. (1895) p.134.

84 Widdicombe, J. (1891) p.67.

85 Ibid. p.79

86 Du Plessis, J. (1911) p.320 - 321

87 Ibid. p.359.

(ii) Church Services and Instructions

For practical and educational purposes the first Anglican missionaries had to have special simplified services for illiterate heathens: 'A few weeks after our arrival we arranged, with the sanction of the Bishop, a simple mission service in Sesuto, suitable for use among the heathen'.[88] Unlike other church denominations already in Lesotho the Anglicans had an exceptional example of mission work among the South African blacks from Dr. Callaway, the successful Anglican missionary at Springvale in Natal. As Callaway would have done, after the 'simple mission service' Fr. Widdicombe taught the children who came to the mission a Sesotho version of two 'well known morning and evening hymns, together with the Agnus Dei, also in their own tongue'.[90] The missionaries were fortunate to find a man who knew a little simple English and they employed him as interpreter.

Children were gathered together daily by Mr. Lacy, a helper of the missionaries who came from the Free State. He taught them to read, to write and sing. They were instructed twice a week in the foundation truths of the Christian faith.[91]

(iii) Village Visits

The English, like the Catholic and the French Protestant missionaries visited the people in their villages. Widdicombe describes young Fr. Francis Balfour thus:

> He speedily acquired a fair knowledge of Sesuto and took as his special work the evangelization of the heathen people in the villages round the heights and over

---

88 Widdicombe, J. Ibid. p.91

89 Brain, J. Catholic Beginnings in Natal and Beyond Durban.T.W.Griggs & Co.Pty.Ltd.1975. pp.55, 69+ St. George, H. Ibid. pp 326 - 328

90 Widdicombe, J. Ibid.

91 Ibid.

> the Tlhotse, visiting them daily, either on horseback or on foot, and sitting down and chatting with them in their own huts and kraals. (92)

Such visits became one of the most important occupations of the Anglican missionaries in Lesotho. Some of their Church members were scattered in villages separated by long distances, and by mountains, and could be visited only once or twice a year. Bishop Balfour who spared himself no pain or trouble visited remote villages on horseback to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation or to bless new Church buildings.[93]

(iv) Catechists and Schools.

Widdicombe in the account is his life in Lesotho said that the first two years in the country had taught him plainly that if the mission was to prosper and do what it was appointed to do it would before long, be absolutely necessary to train up native converts to take a large share in it themselves.[94] The importance of building schools to educate the people, and to convert those who would come to the schools to the faith became apparent. Thus as soon as the first hut was built, Mr. Lacy gathered the children together daily.[95]

The boarding school for boys, begun in 1886, is described as 'this important and growing work, now a distinct feature of the mission'[96]

Canon R. Dove, in his account, indicates clearly that many converts were won through the schools.[97]

---

92 Widdicombe, J. (1895) pp 110-111.
93 Widdicombe, J. (1891) p.280.
94 Ibid. (1895) p.134.
95 Ibid. p. 103.
96 Ibid. p.337
97 Dove, R. Ibid. p.101.

D. SUMMARY AND COMMENT

Missionaries, urged by the zeal for evangelization which was widespread among Christians in the last century, volunteered to work among the Basotho. All Church denominations were welcomed by Moshoeshoe I, and he treated all missionaries kindly without any bias. His eagerness to have missionaries in his country was, apparently, prompted more by material and security reasons than by religious sentiments.

Missionary evangelical enterprise, as can be seen from the foregoing description, would form a basis for subsequent teaching of religion in the country, and in the schools in particular:

a) Christianity came as a divided religion and has been taught as such ever since.

b) School education introduced by the missionaries involves the teaching of religion, used in the schools as an important part of the evangelization programme.

c) The kind of religion taught in the schools is, evidently, more doctrinal than educational, since it takes the form of the catechism, (see pages 9 and 17) which did not come into existence until the days of the Protestant Reformation,[98] when Martin Luther published his concept of the Christian faith in a book of questions and answers which he called a 'catechism',[99] a title the Catholics have since used for their 'Counter Reformation' question and answer booklet.[100]

---

98 Carter, G. Ibid. p.61

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

All three church denominations laid strong emphasis on love for humanity and on fellow feeling. The visits of the missionaries in the villages, which were one of the most important means of evangelization, are a clear indication of this emphasis.

CHAPTER 2

DISPUTES BETWEEN THE CHURCH DENOMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION

It appears that the Catholics came to Lesotho and established their mission there after the P.E.M.S. (Paris Evangelical Mission Society) had repeatedly objected to the establishment of the Anglican Church in Lesotho. (See page 21)

Disputes soon began between the P.E.M.S. and the Catholics, but the Anglican missionaries, who began their work some ten years later apparently kept away from these disputes. Moshoeshoe I himself had, on some occasions, to play the role of arbiter between the Catholic and the P.E.M.S. missionaries.[1]

> The relations between the Catholic Church and the other Churches established in Lesotho were characterised by suspicion, animosity, hostility or, at least by mutual ignorance. The relations were particularly tense between the Catholic Church and the Paris Evengelical Mission. (2)

The silence adopted by the Anglican mission was partly due to Bishop Webb's instructions to the first Anglican missionaries.[3] Dove, R. (1975) has stated that it is possible that Bishop Webb, when he wrote those injunctions, had before him, letters between the P.E.M.S.

---

1 Roche, A. in Clarte's Australas (Orig. in French) pp 149-150.
St. George, H. Ibid. p.401.
Sanders, P. Ibid. p.277
Fr.Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne, M. Ibid. p.57.

2 Richard, J. Ibid p.62

3 See Chap. 1 p.22.

and Bishop Twells, his predecessor, written soon after Twells' visit to Moshoeshoe and to Morija, the P.E.M.S. centre in 1864.[4] The substance of the letters was:

> the Society objected to the proposed work of the Anglican Church on the grounds that it would be unfair to them after thirty years of uphill work amidst difficulties that were now being resol.ed; that a second church would divide families, especially the royal house; that the Church of England would have an unfair advantage over the Paris Mission as it was an established church and would therefore get money and sympathy from the Cape authorities; and that the Society feared that Bishop Twells would stress the differences between the two churches as he belonged to a party in the Church of England which valued episcopacy and ceremony. (5)

Most of these objections, it seems, could also apply to the Catholic Church whose missionaries had been given a site at Tloute by Moshoeshoe, without first consulting the P.E.M.S. There was much discontent on the side of the latter, and disputes were soon to arise, which were to become a feature of the relationship between the churches for many years. The Basotho were to learn, mostly through such disputes, that Christianity was divided and denominational.

The subject matter of the disputes follows.

---

4 Dove, R. Ibid. p.17.

5 Ibid. p. 16-17.

and Bishop Twells, his predecessor, written soon after Twells' visit to Moshoeshoe and to Morija, the P.E.M.S. centre in 1864.[4] The substance of the letters was:

> the Society objected to the proposed work of the Anglican Church on the grounds that it would be unfair to them after thirty years of uphill work amidst difficulties that were now being resolved; that a second church would divide families, especially the royal house; that the Church of England would have an unfair advantage over the Paris Mission as it was an established church and would therefore get money and sympathy from the Cape authorities; and that the Society feared that Bishop Twells would stress the differences between the two churches as he belonged to a party in the Church of England which valued episcopacy and ceremony. (5)

Most of these objections, it seems, could also apply to the Catholic Church whose missionaries had been given a site at Tloute by Moshoeshoe, without first consulting the P.E.M.S. There was much discontent on the side of the latter, and disputes were soon to arise, which were to become a feature of the relationship between the churches for many years. The Basotho were to learn, mostly through such disputes, that Christianity was divided and denominational.

The subject matter of the disputes follows.

---

4 Dove, R. Ibid. p.17.

5 Ibid. p. 16-17.

A. DOCTRINE: Christ the Mediator

a) The P.E.M.S.

Dawson says 'from a purely doctrinal standpoint the differences between Luther and Calvin are extremely small'[6] and, according to Todd 'Calvin goes straight to the heart of Luther's teaching, showing he had accepted it entirely'[7]. For Martin Luther, Christ is the only Mediator. His theology is always Christo-centric.[8] Because of his firmness on this point his teaching can be summarised, on this theme of Christ as Mediator, as follows:

> We must hold on to Christ as our sole Mediator. We must not invoke the saints: (9)

Hence, when Mabille was angered by what he and all his colleagues regarded as the Roman Catholic intrusion into their mission field, he attacked the Catholic devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Their difference on this issue became one of the major themes of dispute between the two churches. Even when, some fifteen years later, the Church of England was established in Lesotho, both Mabille and his wife did not spare it from similar attacks. Smiths description:

> The Puseyites, as Mabille always named them (Anglicans) taught views, as did the Romanists, against which all the history of the Huguenots and of Swiss Protestantism was a protest. (10)

---

6 Dawson, C. The Dividing of Christendom. New York Sheed & Ward Inc. 1965. p.109.

7 Todd, J. Reformation. London. Darton,Longman & Todd, Ltd. 1971. p.289.

8 Dawson, C. Ibid.

9 Hoare, R. and Henser, A. Christ Through the Ages From the Reformation to the Second Vatican Council Vol. 2. London. Geoffrey Chapman. 1966. p.8.

Latourette, K. Christianity Through the Ages. New York. Harper & Row. 1965. p.177.

10 Smith, E. Ibid. p.239.

The converted Basotho pagans could not avoid being drawn into the disputes:

> That same day Matthew, a Catholic convert, was also at Mabille's place; he had great disputes with the Majakane (Basotho protestants) who led him to Mabille. The latter denied the absolution of sins, spoke against the Blessed Virgin, saying she was a sinner.(11) (Translated from the French)

Smith describes Mabille in this way:

> He was not a bigoted denominationalist... If he had no love for Roman Catholicism or High Churchism it was because he regarded them as departures from the purity of fundamental Christianity. (12)

b) The Catholics

The Catholic Church while maintaining the supremacy of Christ in everything (including mediation since He is supreme over all created things) has much devotion to Mary, His mother. It believes that:

> Jesus has mysteriously linked the Church on earth with the Church Triumphant in heaven. Therefore we may ask the angels and the saints, especially Mary, the Mother of God, to help us. (13)

The first Catholic missionaries in Lesotho venerated Mary not only because they were Catholics but also because they belonged to a society of Catholic religious which has a special devotion to Mary, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (O.M.I.). They had not been long in Lesotho before they were made aware of the difficulty and rejection they were to face for their devotion to Mary. In one of his letters Fr. Gerard has written:

---

11 Fr.Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne,M. Ibid. p.86
12 Smith, E. Ibid. p. 238
13 Hoare, R and Henser, A. Ibid.

The converted Basotho pagans could not avoid being drawn into the disputes:

> That same day Matthew, a Catholic convert, was also at Mabille's place; he had great disputes with the Majakane (Basotho protestants) who led him to Mabille. The latter denied the absolution of sins, spoke against the Blessed Virgin, saying she was a sinner.(11) (Translated from the French)

Smith describes Mabille in this way:

> He was not a bigoted denominationalist... If he had no love for Roman Catholicism or High Churchism it was because he regarded them as departures from the purity of fundamental Christianity. (12)

b) The Catholics

The Catholic Church while maintaining the supremacy of Christ in everything (including mediation since He is supreme over all created things) has much devotion to Mary, His mother. It believes that:

> Jesus has mysteriously linked the Church on earth with the Church Triumphant in heaven. Therefore we may ask the angels and the saints, especially Mary, the Mother of God, to help us. (13)

The first Catholic missionaries in Lesotho venerated Mary not only because they were Catholics but also because they belonged to a society of Catholic religious which has a special devotion to Mary, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (O.M.I.). They had not been long in Lesotho before they were made aware of the difficulty and rejection they were to face for their devotion to Mary. In one of his letters Fr. Gerard has written:

---

11 Fr.Gerard's Journal in: Ferragne,M. Ibid. p.86
12 Smith, E. Ibid. p. 238
13 Hoare, R and Henser, A. Ibid.

> ...during the day we visit the villages, people are surprised to see and to listen to these terrible Roman Catholics of whom their ministers have often spoken:'the Roman Catholics who worship images, who worship a woman, who sell for money the remission of sins'. (14)
> (Translated from the French)

In another letter, Fr. Gerard says that the first Catholic Mission station would be named Motse-oa-Ma-Jesu (The Place of the Mother of Jesus) in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and also to make up for all the insults of the Protestants.[15]

The Protestants however, never called the mission by that name but referred to it as ROMA. Since they much exceeded the Catholics in number in those days, the mission station as well as the surrounding area became known as Roma up to the present day.

Fr. Gerard was not deterred. He taught much about Mary, and popularised devotion to her. He even introduced and encouraged the use of the following greeting among Catholics in Lesotho:

> Ho rorisoe Jesu Kriste - Praised be Jesus Christ
> and the response:
> Le Maria ea se nang Sekoli - And Mary Immaculate.

It is still used today.

B. CHURCH MINISTRY AND DISCIPLINE

a) The P.E.M.S.

i) Home Country Situation.

The divisive issue at the heart of the Reformation was the nature of the Church.[16] Luther asserted that the true church is 'a purely spiritual Kingdom that has

---

14 Fr. Gerard's letter to Sr. Anne Madeleine 15 October, 1910.

15 Fr. Gerard's letter to Superior General, O.M.I. 4 February, 1864.

16 Todd, J. Ibid. p.289

> ...during the day we visit the villages, people are surprised to see and to listen to these terrible Roman Catholics of whom their ministers have often spoken:'the Roman Catholics who worship images, who worship a woman, who sell for money the remission of sins'. (14)
> (Translated from the French)

In another letter, Fr. Gerard says that the first Catholic Mission station would be named Motse-oa-Ma-Jesu (The Place of the Mother of Jesus) in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and also to make up for all the insults of the Protestants.[15]

The Protestants however, never called the mission by that name but referred to it as ROMA. Since they much exceeded the Catholics in number in those days, the mission station as well as the surrounding area became known as Roma up to the present day.

Fr. Gerard was not deterred. He taught much about Mary, and popularised devotion to her. He even introduced and encouraged the use of the following greeting among Catholics in Lesotho:

> Ho rorisoe Jesu Kriste - Praised be Jesus Christ
> and the response:
> Le Maria ea se nang Sekoli - And Mary Immaculate.

It is still used today.

B. CHURCH MINISTRY AND DISCIPLINE

a) The P.E.M.S.

i) Home Country Situation.

The divisive issue at the heart of the Reformation was the nature of the Church.[16] Luther asserted that the true church is 'a purely spiritual Kingdom that has

---

14 Fr. Gerard's letter to Sr. Anne Madeleine 15 October, 1910.

15 Fr. Gerard's letter to Superior General, O.M.I. 4 February, 1864.

16 Todd, J. Ibid. p.289

nothing to do with the hierarchy or the Roman Papacy - which was, on the contrary 'the Anti-Christ of whom the whole Scripture speaks and the Roman Curia nothing but the Synagogue of Satan.'[17]

Calvin, much like Luther, equates the 'judgement of the Church' with 'custom' (tradition) and rejects it as a possible norm.[18] He also maintains that the Church may exist without any apparent form.[19]

The major difference in their opinion was on the issue of discipline. Calvin had no patience with the confusion of thought, the dogmatic anarchy and the moral disorder that accompanied the earlier phase of the Reformation, most of all perhaps in France.[20] 'In his view the first essential of a reformed Church was to be reformed in discipline and morals. Therefore he brought back the spiritual authority and law of the Church in an even more drastic form than that of the Catholic Church.'[21] The consistory, which included the four orders of teacher, pastor, elder and deacon (or at least the last three of these) exercised a most strict control and supervision over the faith and morals of the whole congregation.[22]

ii) Reflected Image in Lesotho

The French Protestant minister's use of the appelation Roma, or Ba-Roma, whenever they referred to Catholics and to their mission stations whether in speech or in writing[23] is a clear indication of their feelings towards the papacy and of the past contentions that were now being rekindled in a mission country. And with regard to discipline, the

---

17 Dawson, C. Ibid. p.72

18 Todd, J. Ibid.

19 Ibid. p.291, and Latourette, K. Ibid. p.180.

20 Dawson, C. Ibid. p. 109.

21 Ibid, p.110
Walker, W. A History of the Christian Church 3rd Ed Edinburgh. T & T Clark. 1970. p.351

22 Ibid, p.110, and Ibid, p.354.

23 See page 32.

P.E.M.S. missionaries' system reflected the views of Calvin and is described by Smith as 'certainly rigorous.. he who works on Sunday, he who drinks beer, who tells lies, who calumnates or quarrels, is not received at the Lord's Table and if he continues openly in sin, he is cut off from the assembly of the faithful.' [24] For this reason, the French Protestants criticised the Catholic discipline as rather lax. Jacottet when he expresses his disapproval of Chief Masopha's conversion to Catholicism says:

> Thus one can judge, for example, the baptism they administered in extremis, on the old chief Masopha. One can rightly ask whether the cause of the Gospel has gained much by their work.
> Their discipline is too slackened, and they readily apply the ancient doctrine of accommodation to pagan customs...(25)
> (Translated from the French)

b) The Catholics

i) View of the Church.

According to the Catholic Church, the church has both a spiritual and a visible form: the latter has, apparently, been much more emphasized than the former, both in teaching and in practice. There always was, nevertheless, mention of terms like 'Christ's mystical Body: the baptism of intention,' and the more biblical term 'the kingdom of God'. Hierarchy in the church, and submission to the judgement of the church have always been much emphasized.[26]

Yet in the period 1350 - 1500 'many bishops behaved more like secular lords than pastors of their flocks'[27] There was much corruption in and outside Rome, mostly in Rome. Both spiritual and structural gains, painfully won in

---

24 Smith, E. Ibid. p. 124.

25 Jacottet, E. Histoire de la Mission du Lessouto in Livre D'Or. p.454.

26 Todd, J. Ibid. p.289f.

27 Latourette, K. Ibid. p.153

P.E.M.S. missionaries' system reflected the views of Calvin and is described by Smith as 'certainly rigorous.. he who works on Sunday, he who drinks beer, who tells lies, who calumnates or quarrels, is not received at the Lord's Table and if he continues openly in sin, he is cut off from the assembly of the faithful.' [24] For this reason, the French Protestants criticised the Catholic discipline as rather lax. Jacottet when he expresses his disapproval of Chief Masopha's conversion to Catholicism says:

> Thus one can judge, for example, the baptism they administered <u>in extremis</u>, on the old chief Masopha. One can rightly ask whether the cause of the Gospel has gained much by their work.
> Their discipline is too slackened, and they readily apply the ancient doctrine of accommodation to pagan customs...(25)
> (Translated from the French)

b) The Catholics

i) View of the Church.

According to the Catholic Church, the church has both a spiritual and a visible form: the latter has, apparently, been much more emphasized than the former, both in teaching and in practice. There always was, nevertheless, mention of terms like 'Christ's mystical Body: the baptism of intention,' and the more biblical term 'the kingdom of God'. Hierarchy in the church, and submission to the judgement of the church have always been much emphasized.[26]

Yet in the period 1350 - 1500 'many bishops behaved more like secular lords than pastors of their flocks'[27] There was much corruption in and outside Rome, mostly in Rome. Both spiritual and structural gains, painfully won in

---

24 Smith, E. Ibid. p. 124.

25 Jacottet, E. <u>Histoire de la Mission du Lessouto</u> in Livre D'Or. p.454.

26 Todd, J. Ibid. p.289f.

27 Latourette, K. Ibid. p.153

earl centuries were apparently being lost.[28] Thus Luther's attacks on the papacy for the pomp and luxury of popes and cardinals, some of whom were notorious for nepotism in their appointments, were deserved.[29]

Despite such abuses in the Church's ministry the impression has always been given that priests and bishops are a sine qua non in the Church of Christ, and in spite of the Church's weaknesses they regard themselves as belonging to 'the Church of Christ'. The Counter-Reformation, or Catholic Reformation did correct many of the abuses in the papacy and among the clergy.

ii) As reflected in Lesotho

The first Catholic missionaries always described the Roman Catholic Church as the only true Church of Christ.[30] Writing about Moshoeshoe I and his relationships with the first missionaries, Sanders states that any confidence which Moshoeshoe had retained in the Protestant ministers' theological rectitude must have been shaken, at the very least, by such propaganda.[31] This is also reflected in Bishop Allard's criticism of the apparent lack of the sacramental aspect in the Protestants' teaching and ministry. He looked upon Protestant services as merely the assembling of people 'to preach to them, to sing some canticles, to say some prayers and nothing more'.[32] In the same way, Fr. Gerard undervalued the efforts and the ministry of the French Protestant ministers. This he has shown in his statement that the defections among the Protestant converts were due to the ministers' inefficiency.[33]

---

28 Latourette, K. Ibid. p.154.

29 Ibid. p.151.

30 Lebreton, H. Ibid.

31 Sanders, P. Ibid. p.127. (Note that the second part in this statement is an error arising from Sander's misinterpretation of the original written in Sotho)

32 St.George, H. Ibid. Allard's Journal p.386-7

33 Lebreton, H. Ibid. Fr. Gerard's letter 4 Feb. 1864

c) The Anglicans

i) Home Country Situation.

Under Henry VIII the separation of the Church of England from Rome did not entail significant doctrinal change.[34] In the 'Elizabethan Settlement' the effort was made to steer a middle course between catholic heritage and protestantism.[35] Thus, for example, 'the Apostolic Succession was perpetuated through Bishops who had served under Henry VIII and Edward VI and so, directly or indirectly, had received it from the undivided Catholic Church',[36]

The Anglican Church still has both Catholic and Protestant elements, each represented in its clergy and constituency, even after adopting the 'Thirty-nine Articles'.[37]

ii) In Lesotho

The only instance of a dispute engaged in by an Anglican which can be substantiated by written documents, concerns Mabille and Bishop Webb of Bloemfontein.

The Bishop was considering means of providing for the spiritual needs of British officials in Lesotho, which had become a British Colony, as well as the need to answer Moshoeshoe's invitation to establish an Anglican mission in Lesotho. Mabille drew the Bishop's attention to the harm that might be done if very diverse forms of worship, discipline and doctrine were introduced among the Basotho.[38] The Bishop acknowledged that the Paris

---

34 Latourette, K. Ibid. p.190. Dawson, J. (1965) Walker, W. A History of the Christian Church 3rd Ed. Edinburgh. T.&.T.Clark Ltd. 1970.p 359.

35 Ibid

36 Ibid p.191. Walker, W. Ibid. p.367

37 Latourette, K. Ibid. p. 195

38 Smith, E. Ibid. p.238

Mission had achieved much good, and that the baptism they conferred upon the converts admitted these into the universal Church.[39] He went on:

> Basutoland is not yet a Christian country; besides, your (French Protestant) teaching is incomplete; the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession is set aside by you, and that of the sacraments is enfeebled. (40)

This goes to prove that the apparent silence and aloofness from denominational disputes in Lesotho does not necessarily imply that the Anglicans had not been involved in sectarian struggles. It could also be part of the reason for the instructions to the first Anglican missionaries in Lesotho. [41]

C. THE BIBLE

Disputes between the French Protestant and Catholic missionaries also concerned the Scripture text.

Since the Reformation, Protestant churches have regarded the Scripture text as the only religious authority. The humanistic tradition which had influenced Zwingle and Calvin stressed the study of the sources and the two leeders insisted on submitting the Roman Catholic faith to the test of its conformity with the Scriptures.[42] Luther had also emphasized the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures as the sole authority for the Christian, and that it was the right and duty of each Christian to interpret the Scriptures. [43]

---

39 Smith. E. Ibid.

40 Journal des Missions Evangelique,1877 p.574
Du Plessis, J. (1911) and Smith, E.Ibid. p.239

41 See Chapter 1. p.22.

42 Latourette, K. Ibid. pp 176-177.

43 Ibid p.171; Hoare, F. and Henser, A.(1966) p.6.

Mission had achieved much good, and that the baptism they conferred upon the converts admitted these into the universal Church.[39] He went on:

> Basutoland is not yet a Christian country; besides, your (French Protestant) teaching is incomplete; the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession is set aside by you, and that of the sacraments is enfeebled. (40)

This goes to prove that the apparent silence and aloofness from denominational disputes in Lesotho does not necessarily imply that the Anglicans had not been involved in sectarian struggles. It could also be part of the reason for the instructions to the first Anglican missionaries in Lesotho.[41]

C. THE BIBLE

Disputes between the French Protestant and Catholic missionaries also concerned the Scripture text.

Since the Reformation, Protestant churches have regarded the Scripture text as the only religious authority. The humanistic tradition which had influenced Zwingle and Calvin stressed the study of the sources and the two leaders insisted on submitting the Roman Catholic faith to the test of its conformity with the Scriptures.[42] Luther had also emphasized the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures as the sole authority for the Christian, and that it was the right and duty of each Christian to interpret the Scriptures.[43]

---

39 Smith. E. Ibid.

40 Journal des Missions Evangelique,1877 p.374
Du Plessis, J. (1911) and Smith, E.Ibid. p.239

41 See Chapter 1. p.22.

42 Latourette, K. Ibid. pp 176-177.

43 Ibid p.171; Hoare, R. and Henser, A.(1966) p.6.

The position of the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the Bible is:

> We must believe God's revelation as it is found in Holy Scripture and in oral tradition. The teaching office of the Church explains the Bible and tradition to us. In doing this it is supported by the Holy Spirit. (44)

It is well known that the study and reading of the Bible has not been emphasized adequately in certain periods in the history of the Church, partly as an attempt to control heretical interpretations thereof. Hence the need to re-emphasize the importance of Sacred Scriptures, evidently pointed out by Vatican II some two decades ago.[45]

However the French Protestant missionaries in their disputes with the Catholics seem to have looked upon the apparently less stress given to the Bible in Catholic services as tantamount to failing to evangelize. Catholics must have been criticized for this often, for one Catholic researcher in Lesotho states:

> Moreover, their opinion of Catholic priests is not very flattering. According to them they don't evangelize and their work is unfruitful because they don't announce the Word of God.(46).(Translated from the French)

This unflattering statement echoes what has been written by two French Protestant writers in their respective books concerning Catholic missionaries in Lesotho:

> ...But it has introduced in the country an element which, in the long run, can do nothing but harm to our influence and to the progress of true Christianity.(47)
> (Translated from the French)

---

44 Hoare, R. and Henser, A. (1966) p.6.

45 Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.

46 Richard, J. Ibid. p.62.

47 Jacottet, E.(1912) in Livre D'Or. p.283
Ellenberger, V. (1938) pp.150 - 151.

Fr. Gerard must have heard, and read, such criticisms when he wrote the following in a letter addressed to Mabille:

> Gentlemen, Catholics do not forbid the reading of Holy Scripture, but its abuse. In fact, Pius VIII in his letter of February, 1828, has advised the Bishops in England to encourage their people to read the Bible saying that there was nothing more useful, more advisable. That is our doctrine! (48)
>
> (Translated from the French)

D. SUMMARY AND COMMENT

The denominational disputes destroyed, or at least lessened the Christian witness as well as the dignity of the church denominations involved:

> It is reported that Moshoeshoe I is said to have been shocked by the virulence of the disputes between the French Protestant Church and the Catholic Church.(49)

A similar remark was given by Chief Moroka of the Barolong. Asked if he would not become a Christian, Moroka replied that he would do so as soon as the two sects working as missionaries among his people could agree together, and show friendly relations.[50]

Though there has been tremendous improvement in the relations between church denominations since Vatican II, some of the hurts inflicted by the churches on each other are still reflected in one way or another in their mutual dealings.

---

48 Fr. Gerard's Journal 16 Jan, 1870 in: Ferragne M. Ibid. p.86

49 Crisp, W. (An Anglican priest who visited Moshoeshoe I) in a letter dated 8 January,1868, Crisp Papers, Gubbins Library, Johannesburg.
Sanders, P. Ibid. p.277.
Theal, G. (1920) Vol. V. p.80

50 Du Plessis, J. Ibid. p.358.

The doctrinal disputes tended to increase the emphasis on doctrinal teaching, with the result that some important aspects of Christian teaching got too little emphasis in religion classes in and outside school. The doctrinally orientated catechisms became, in some cases, the only way to teach religion.

Another result of the disputes has been more sectarian feelings which have affected religious education in the secondary schools.

These disputes also led to much rivalry between the Church denominations.

CHAPTER 3

RIVALRY BETWEEN THE CHURCH DENOMINATIONS

A study of the history of the missions reveals three areas in which evidence of rivalry can be found, or which present situations from which rivalry can be expected to result. These areas are:

a) Significant experiences allegedly confirming God's favour
b) Expressed feelings suggesting rivalry
c) Rivalry in actions

A. Significant Experiences allegedly confirming God's Favour

1. The French Protestant Mission (P.E.M.S.)

Apart from winning Moshoeshoe's favour right from the beginning[1] and being the only Christian mission in the country for thirty years, the French Protestant Mission had some experiences which were believed to be a special sign of God's blessing and support. Here is an example: In 1836, Moshoeshoe I, in answer to Moroka's invitation to attack the Kora and the Xhosa who were living on the Riet River and who had been freely raiding the Barolong, advanced at the head of his army under cover of darkness. They swept off the enemy's cattle and the Kora gave chase. It happened, however, that many of the Kora's horses plunged into game pits and for this reason they were killed without difficulty.[2] The Basotho

---

1 See Chapter 1. p.4

2 Rev.Mr.Rolland to P.E.M.S.Committee,28 June 1836, Bas Records iii 40-3; Goselin's Journal Aug 1836 in J.M.E, 1837 pp 286-7; Arbousset to P.E.M.S. Committee 26 Feb. 1845, J.M.E.1845 pp.249-50; Casalis, E. The Basutos pp.69-70

had thus gained victory over the Kora who had, for some years, caused them restless nights. From then on Moshoeshoe had no trouble with the Kora. That was the end of the 'difaqane' or tribal wars.

> But to the French Protestant missionaries the approximate coincidence of their own arrival and the cessation of war was sufficient proof that the Basotho owed their deliverance to God.(3)

Casalis has expressed this conviction in a very explicit manner in a hymn he composed, which may still be heard in the Lesctho Evangelical Church (L.E.C.), formerly the French Protestant Church or the P.E.M.S:

> The feet of peace which come from the Lord
> Have come to Lesotho, the country of blood;
> When they appeared then Satan trembled
> The War alarm was stilled,
> And our enemies became reconciled to us.
>
> In the caves of darkness,
> in the cannibal's ruins,
> There is sung a hymn of praise to God;
> The country rejoices,
> and is beauteous with villages,
> Prosperity has come instead of trouble.(4)
> (Translated from Sotho)

2 The Catholic Mission

When P. Sanders describes the period when the Catholic mission had just been established, and the first two French Protestant missionaries, Casalis and Arbousset, had been replaced by Jousse and Mabille respectively, he says 'The French Protestant Missionaries had been so critical of the chiefs...and had so little identified

---

3 Sanders,P. Ibid.p.52; Jacottet,E. Histoire de la Mission du Lessouto in Livre D'Or. p.187, and Bianquis,J. Le Jubile de 1908 in Livre D'Or.p.569.

4 Hymn by Casalis in Lifela tsa Sione (Songs of Zion 24th Edn,revised. Morija. 1958
Sanders,P.Ibid. p.52 translated into English.
Casalis to P.E.M.S.Committee 4 March 1845, J.M.E. 1845 and in The Basutos. p.108
Arbousset to P.E.M.S.Committee 30 Dec.1847, J.M.E. 1848 p.208 and Jacottet,E. Ibid. pp.175 - 245.

themselves with the national struggle, that they were now widely suspected of holding Free State sympathies. The Catholics however escaped this odium. They never attacked the chiefs' policies, but exhorted them to fight manfully and to trust in Mary.' [5]

The incident referred to in the above quotation was the 1854 war with the Boers, the battle for Thaba-Bosiu, Moshoeshoe's stronghold. For weeks the Boers had continually shelled that impregnable rock. Moshoeshoe remained firm and refused to capitulate, even though men and beasts were starving to death on the mountain. Food was sometimes sent to Moshoeshoe secretly by Fr. Gerard and other missionaries. On several occasions Fr. Gerard made the journey up to the fortress himself to bring supplies. These activities, in all of which he risked his life, made him known and loved by the people.[6]

According to Lebreton, Bishop Allard and Fr. Gerard had gathered their catechumens together to pray for the nation on 15th August, 1865, the day on which Catholics celebrate the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.[7] That same day, a commando under Louis Wepener was led up the Rafutho pass to gain the mountain top. Wepener was trying to find a way round the walled fortification that blocked the top of the pass when he fell dead, hit by a rifle shot. Soon afterwards the Basotho charged down the mountain side and routed the whites.[8]

Adverting to this event, Peter Sanders, referring to the Catholic missionaries, says: 'they were convinced that their prayers had been wonderfully answered when Wepener was defeated on 15th August, the festival of the Blessed Virgin's Assumption.'[9] Though neither Bishop Allard nor

---

5 Sanders, P. Ibid. p.52

6 Lebreton,H. Ibid. pp.73 & 98;Brain,J.Ibid. p.86.

7 Libreton,H. Ibid. p.75; St.George,H.Ibid. p.444.

8 Thompson,L. Survival in Two Worlds. Oxford. Clarendon Press.1975 p.281 & Becker,P.Ibid.pp.252-3

9 Ibid. p.281

Fr. Gerard in their reports on the battle make any mention of such a conviction. Lebreton, one of their colleagues, makes it very likely that they were convinced that God had answered the prayers they made through Mary:

> This day, August 15, has always been a great day for Fr. Gerard...a nation's day, the day that brought deliverance to the nation. Each year on this day, he exhorted the people to have faith in the Blessed Virgin and to have recourse to her in all their difficulties since they were saved through her prayers.(10)
> (Translated from the French)

For both French Protestants and Catholics alike, the deliverance of the nation, which they believed came about in answer to their petitions, was a sign of their appointment by God to evangelize the Basotho, or, at least, a sign of God's approval of their mission. Hence the possibility of not expecting a rival church.

B. EXPRESSED FEELINGS OF RIVALRY

That there was rivalry between the French Protestant and the Catholic Missions can also be proved by reports and statements made by the missionaries themselves or by other writers

1. The French Protestant Mission

One of the objections the French Protestants raised against the establishment of the Anglican Church in Lesotho, and which holds true against the Catholics as well, was that the Anglicans would have 'an unfair advantage over the French Mission.'[11] This implies competition and rivalry. This same spirit is evident in the words used by an early missionery referring to the establishment of the Catholic mission:

---

10 Lebreton, H. Ibid. p.74

11 See Chapter 2, p.1

> In 1862 a new element made its entry in Lesotho. Two French Catholic missionaries...Bishop Allard and Fr. Gerard came to ask Moshoeshoe for permission to establish a mission in his country, a rival for ours. (12)
> (Translated from the French)

Towards the end of his history narrative, this same writer says, referring to the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church:

> The presence of these two churches, which one may, without failing in charity, call rival churches, complicates, in many respects, the position of our mission...and the rivalry of these three missions...is a stumbling block for the Basotho...(13)
> (Translated from the French)

A word that appears quite often in some of the writings of the French Protestant ministers is 'conquest'. And this word, whether used in a material or spiritual sense, implies competition and rivalry accompanying war or a struggle. In his book Landmarks in which he presents the achievements, as well as the set-backs encountered by the French Protestant Church within a certain period, Ellenberger uses the word conquest often:

> We may add that the spirit of Conquest that animated the Church of Basutoland is indirectly responsible for the beginning, by Revs. Berthound and Creux, of the Swiss Mission in Africa.(14)

After a few lines, he continues:

> The printing press was brought to Morija..and a book sales department, or book depot, started in 1862. All this was done in a spirit of life and faith and conquest. (15)

Using a different tone, yet revealing the same spirit of rivalry, Du Plessis, in his very biased account of the missionary enterprise in Lesotho, says:

---

12 Jacottet, E. Ibid. p.282-8.
13 Ibid P.435.
14 Ellenberger, V. Ibid. p.17.
15 Ibid. 1933

> The Roman Catholics, indeed, and the Church of England, who acknowledge no boundaries between themselves and the other churches, established themselves in Basutoland...But in spite of their presence the French mission remains by far the most important numerically, as it is the most influential, ecclesiastically, of the christianizing agencies at work in the Lesuto. (16) (Translated from the French)

2. The Catholic Mission

The Catholic missionaries show by what they said, and by what has been written about them, that they wanted to rival the French Protestant Church.

Fr. Gerard in his letter to the Superior General of the Oblates mentions certain things that the Catholic missionaries planned to do to improve their school, so that the educational facilities at Roma would not be inferior to those at the French Protestant mission.[17]

Bishop Allard records that on one occasion he and Fr. Gerard talking to people at Thaba-Bosiu, many of whom had been converted to the French Protestant Church, found them very inquisitive and were always ready to discuss religious subjects with the Catholics. He told the people that:

> Their Protestant religion is a new religion and therefore not from Christ. (18)

In yet another instance, Bishop Allard's tone suggests rivalry and carries the implication that the Catholics are beginning to gain the Chief's favour, as well as that of the people. He mentions that Moshoeshoe was much dis-satisfied with the P.E.M.S. missionaries for not upholding his authority, while the Basotho, on their part, complain that the P.E.M.S. missionaries were too much

---

16 Du Plessis, J. Ibid. pp.320-1.

17 Letter to Superior General, 6 November, 1862.

18 Allard's Journal 8 Jan. 1864, and Lebreton, H. Ibid. p.5.

concerned with their wives who, the people complain, are provided for by their husbands in great style.[19]

Both in his Journal, and in the accounts on early missionaries by Catholic writers, Fr. Gerard uses the word 'Bathobi'(those who walked out stealthily) when he refers to French Protestants and their converts, usually as a response to their attacks on the Catholic Church; sometimes the appelation is used with rival feelings.[20] For instance:

> We had a dispute with him near Moshoeshoe's bedside, I gave a lesson to all these Bathobi on the true religion.(21)
> (Translated from the French)

While Du Plessis' account shows that he is on the side of the P.E.M.S.,[22] that of Coates, A. (1966), though reflecting rivalry, seems to favour the Roman Catholics:

> In 1924 the first Belgian and Canadian Fathers arrived and the Catholic Church moved into an epoch of rapid expansion. A seminary was founded for training Basotho clergh...Since then the Roman Catholic Church has overtaken the French Protestants considerably in numbers..The Roman Catholic Church starts today as the most powerful Christian force in Basutoland. A census of 1956 gave a return of 33 percent Catholics, as against 21 per cent French Protestants, 9 percent Anglicans and 5 percent other Christians.(23)

Moshoeshoe was aware of the rivalry. Sanders, quoting Maitin, a French Protestant, says that after the arrival of the Catholics the Chief was more demanding for he knew that the French Protestants were afraid of disobliging him in case he turned to their rivals.[24]

---

19 Allard's letter to Superior General 31 Mar.1862.
20 Ferragne,M. Ibid., and Lebreton, H. Ibid.
21 Ferragne,M. Ibid. p.88
22 See page 46.
23 Coates, A.Basutoland.London.H.M.S.O.1966. p.104.
24 Sanders, P. Ibid. p.274.

C. RIVALRY IN ACTIONS

i) The P.E.M.S. and the Catholics rivalled for Moshoeshoe's conversion:

Both the French Protestants and the Catholics felt they needed the support of Moshoeshoe I, as well as that of the lesser chiefs, to achieve the conversion of the whole of Lesotho.

On the French side, Jacottet states:

> The missionaries who had had great hopes to see the Chief fixing his abode close to theirs were naturally disappointed... Moshoeshoe's influence, if he was their next door neighbour, would add much more to theirs. (25)
> (Translated from the French)

Mrs. A. Mabille, a daughter of Casalis, also knew the importance of winning the chiefs to the Church, for she has written:

> On my arrival in Basutoland, I felt that I had a special mission to the chiefs. They had known me as a child, I was the daughter of their missionary, so that more than any other, I had a claim upon their confidence and affection. Who more than I had the right to talk to them and show them their duty?(26)

Armed with this conviction, Adele Mabille urged the then aged Moshoeshoe I to be converted, reminding him of all that the French Protestant Missionaries had done for him.[27]

On the side of the Catholic Church, Fr. Gerard prayed for Moshoeshoe's conversion, and even made attempts to convert the old chief. On one occasion, Fr. Gerard seems pleased to see that his rivals are losing ground:

---

25 Jacottet, E. Ibid. p.174.

26 Mrs. Mabille's report in Smith, E. The Mabilles of Basutoland. pp 182 and 359.
Becker, P. Ibid. p.149.

27 Souveniers quoted in Smith, E. Ibid. p.183.

> A consecration of the nation was made, and of the person of Moshoeshoe and of his subjects, etc...We have been to visit Moshoeshoe. We have witnessed with our own eyes and heard with our own ears how disgusted he is with these Protestant missionaries, and with Jousse, especially. He seems to love and to have an esteem for us. He fervently asks for prayers.(28) (Translated from the French)

The rivalry intensified when the old chief was nearing his end; even the mere thought that he died a French Protestant convert, or a Catholic, would have meant much to the respective denominations. According to Catholic Journal reports, the ministers of both religions exchanged angry glances, more than once, at the bedside of the dying chief, each eager to win him over to their respective churches.[29]

Mrs. Mabille's prayers, and sobs, apparently won the old chief over, and he consented to be baptised. Smith, E. (1939) says that Jousse was no less anxious than she was for the conversion. After a visit from Jousse, Moshoeshoe sent an attendant, Moshe Moseetse with a message to Jousse for Casalis and Arbousset 'I am become a believer'.[30]

This opportunity was taken to set a date for the solemn baptism, but, by repeatedly postponing the day, Moshoeshoe died, unbaptised, on March 11th, 1870.[32]

---

28 Fr. Gerard's Journal 2nd and 14th February, 1868 in Ferragne, M. Ibid. p.62.

29 Ibid. 8th October, 1867. p.37.
Lebreton, H. Ibid. p.126.

30 Smith, E. Ibid. p.184.
Jacottet, E. Ibid. pp.314 - 315.
St. George, H. Ibid. p.456

31 Jousse to Casalis, 1 Feb 1870 in J.M.E.1870 p.128.

32 Jacottet, E. Ibid. p.315.
Brain, J. Ibid. p.92.

Commenting, Jacottet says:

> But, alas! faithful to the last moment to his non-committal policy, he postponed, from day to day, his baptism.(33)
> (Translated from the French)

Describing the last days of Moshoeshoe's life, Sanders says that the two missions had, obviously, redoubled their efforts to win him over; partly from a genuine and fervent desire to save his soul, and partly in the hope of gaining a victory that would redound to their advantage throughout the country.[34]

ii) Rival 'doctrines'

a) Polygamy

The French Protestants did not compromise in this respect; polygamy was not tolerated since it was clearly opposed to the teaching of the New Testament.[35] For this reason, Casalis insisted that if a junior wife of a polygamous husband wished to be baptised and become a Christian, she had to demand a divorce on the ground that she could not continue to live in sin.[36]

The Catholics with the same view on this, differed only in their use of the Pauline 'favour of the faith privilege', according to which a party in a marriage (or polygamous marriage) between persons not baptised, if he or she becomes a Christian and the other party remains unconverted and refuses to cohabit at all, or is unwilling to cohabit without giving offence to God, e.g. is unwilling to give up polygamy, then the converted party may enter into a new marriage, but only after the unconverted party has refused to give a

---

33 Jacottet, E. Ibid. p.315.
34 Sanders, P. Ibid. p.312.
35 Ibid p.123.
36 Ibid pp.125, 128.

favourable answer to formal questions pertaining to the case in question.[37] According to this privilege, a converted polygamist could recognize the second wife, instead of the first one, as his wife if the first wife refuses to co-habit.[38]

This must have rivalled the Protestants' rigid measure. One writer stated that the Catholic's policy in this regard led to many thousands of conversions.[39]

b) The 'Bride Price' (Bohadi)

Sotho custom required that at least ten head of cattle be paid to the parents of the girl by her prospective husband before the marriage, otherwise it was not considered valid.[40]

The French Protestants forbade the paying or receiving of the bride price among their converts. They found it degrading, reducing women to a state verging on slavery.[41] Smith, E., quoting Coillard, describes the giving or accepting of cattle to seal the marriage contract as a sinful offence.[42] He also reports that Letsie, Moshoeshoe's successor, had to yield to Mrs. Mabille's insistence, and gave his daughter in marriage without 'bohadi'

---

37 Allards Journal, 22 Sept. 1867.
St. George, H. Ibid. pp.435-8.

38 Allards Journal, 9 July, 1865.
St. George, H. Ibid. pp.335 ff.
Ferragne, M. Ibid. p.25

39 Coates, A. Basutoland. London. H.M.S.O.1966 p.107

40 Sekese, A. Mekhoale Meetlo ea Basotho, Morija
Dieterlem, H.and Kohler, F. Les Bassoutos d'autrefois in Livre D'or.pp.44-50
Laydevant, F. Ibid. p.18

41 Sanders, P. Ibid. p.123

42 Smith, E. Ibid. p.123
Dieterlem, H. and Kohler, F. Les Bassoutos d'aujourd'hui in Livre D'or. p.480
Coates, A. Ibid. p.107

43 Smith, E. Ibid. the last chapter.

The Catholic approach to bride price was different. Replying to Moshoeshoe's question on the subject, Fr. Gerard said:

> The bride price, as such, is not a sinful offence, but it could be sinful depending on the intentions; for instance, if the girl's father treats the matter as though it were a commercial transaction, giving his daughter in exchange for cattle as if she were an object of trade, or giving her to the highest bidder, or forcing her into marriage against her will.(44)
>
> (Translated from Sotho)

Coates, A. (1966) explains as follows:

> The Catholics furthermore came to certain doubt about the wisdom of prohibiting the bride-gift... Marriage without a bride-gift was a cheap marriage; it had a hole-in-the-corner touch about it. The Catholics resolved that provided it was made absolutely clear that marriage was not marriage unless made in church, there need be no objection to the customary exchange of cattle. (45)

The effect of this decision on potential converts, confronted with a church which forbade, and one which permitted the exchange of cattle, put the Catholics in such a favourable light that 'it led to a situation in which the French Protestant Church, if it was not to lose adherents, had to turn a blind eye to cattle exchange'.[46]

iii) Schools and Religious Education

The schools were used by all missionaries as part of the evangelization programme. They could not, for this reason, be unaffected by the rivalry.

---

44 Ferragne, M. Ibid. p.89
Lebreton, H. Ibid. p.84
Ngheku, A. Mohale oa Lesotho, Ntate LeBihan C.M.I
The Catholic Centre, Mazenod. 1962 pp.100-101.

45 Coates, A. Ibid. p.107

46 Ibid.

Secondary education started with the P.E.M.S. at Morija. The pupils at this school wrote the Junior Certificate Examination of the Cape Education Department for the first time in 1929.[47] Religious Education was taught at the Training College which had been established for the purpose of producing evangelists and primary school teachers, and it was taught at the newly established secondary school.[48]

The other denominations soon followed suit, establishing secondary schools in addition to their primary schools. The government had done little towards promoting school education then. Each church denomination felt it was its duty to provide for the education of its members. Laydevant reports that by the first half of the twentieth century the Catholics began to show more interest in all levels of education, especially secondary and teacher training institutions.[49]

A study of the Annual Reports of the Director of Education in Lesotho during this period shows that Religious Education, at both primary and secondary level, was regarded as an important subject in the curriculum:

> Religious teaching, for which each mission lays down the course to be followed, is insisted on in all schools. At the direction of the missionary religious instruction may include service in Church. (50)

The fact that schools were thought to be an extension of the work of evangelization led to much rivalry. The different denominations, especially the P.E.M.S. and the Catholics, did all in their power to increase the number of schools in the hope of winning more converts, and also

---

47 Annual Report of the Director of Education in Lesotho for the Year, 1929. p.13.

48 Ellenberger, V. 1938. Ibid. p.22.

49 Laydevant, F. Ibid. p.86

50 Annual Report for the year 1930 pp. 7, 18 and for 1938 and 1946.

as a precaution to protect the convert from being indoctrinated in the schools belonging to another denomination. There was far too much rivalry in education and it appears that the government had to step in and impose a 'three mile limit' prohibiting the building of new schools within three miles of an existing one.[51]

The institution by the Ministry of Education of the Board of Advice, is another indication of the rivalry noticeable in their educational practices. The functions of this Board are described in this way:

> The Board is a means of promoting closer and more friendly co-operation between the missions themselves and the government... (52)

D. SUMMARY AND COMMENT

The rivalry was revealed in actions and words which could not be hidden from the public. The Basotho came to know that the Christian Church was divided both externally and internally. It became harder for them to know what, in fact, Christianity was. It became hard to choose, and Moshoeshoe's hesitation illustrates this difficulty. Religious Education had to be affected as the schools were part of the evangelizing process. The religious education that resulted, more often than not, sought to achieve the goals of a particular denomination. Such goals are not, necessarily, identical with the aims of Religious Education, in a strictly educational sense.

---

51 The Annual Report of Education for the Year 1946, p. 11, and also in Laydevant, F. Ibid. p.86.

52 Annual Report of Education for the Year, 1929 p.16.

CHAPTER 4

THE TRADITIONAL MAJOR AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

It can be seen from the previous three chapters, that conversion to Christianity appears to have been the goal of the whole missionary endeavour. It can also be argued that the missionaries had another important goal, namely, moral behaviour. The fact that a neophyte had to accept and put into practice the moral teaching of the Gospel is an indication that moral conduct could be what Christianity and religious teaching is aiming at.

This chapter seeks to show by giving citations and other proofs that the first missionaries and their immediate successors did pursue those aims in the evangelization work, or, in some cases, gave that impression. It will then become obvious that what are often regarded, by many teachers, as principal aims of religious education, are a heritage from the past.

This realization will help to make it clear that those aims need to be studied more closely, to be assessed critically, so as to judge whether they are still valid, and appropriate, in the present situation of Religious Education at secondary school level in Lesotho. Nothing should be adhered to simply because it has been handed down from the past.

A. CONVERSION

i) The French Protestant Mission

Richards said that the first missionaries and their immediate successors were 19th Century people steeped in religious romanticism.[1] Struck above all by the comparatively low moral standards of the Basotho and the impending danger of eternal perdition, Christian charity urged them to do all in their power to pull these people out of paganism and ensure their salvation.[2]

Thus the first missionaries were, apparently, much preoccupied with conversion. When P. Becker (1969) describes the arrival and first days of the P.E.M.S. mission in Lesotho he includes the following statement:

> Meanwhile, some four hundred Basotho under Letsie had arrived at Morija with instruction from Moshoeshoe to erect a kraal near the mission station, and settle there permanently. The Frenchmen were delighted. They could see their new chapel filled to capacity with potential converts.(3)

Polygamy was the first custom to be criticized and attacked by all three denominations, because it was more than anything else, a stumbling block to conversion. It was the subject of the first argument between Casalis and the king. After being reminded by Moshoeshoe that Casalis had told the people that the patriarchs were polygamists, the missionary replied:

> ...it is the Word of Christ that we have brought to you, not that of the patriarchs..

then, returning to the theme of conversion, the matter

---

1 Richards, J. Ibid. p.48.
2 Ibid. p.48.
Becker, P. Ibid. p.104.

of their argument he continued:

> And will you not, at the price of some sacrifices, serve as a foundation to the family, to the new city which is going to rise in these places, and which your descendants will not cease to bless? (4)

Thus, conversion, and not a reasoned reflective study of Christianity was the aim of the argument.

G. Dieterlen holds the same position. In his chapter on evangelization the aim of the missionaries in religious instruction is contrasted with the ideas of the people on this issue. Quoting what Arbousset said in a letter to the authorities in Paris, Dieterlen states that the Basotho were not aware that the missionaries' teaching was done for the purpose of converting them.[5] Some of the Basotho however, were aware that conversion was the aim of church teaching and school education for Dieterlen has also reported the following about Moshoeshoe:

> He told me that the schools will not be closed down because he wished that his people may be converted. (6)

ii) The Catholics

The first Catholic missionaries had the same opinion as their Protestant counterparts with regard to the aim of evangelization and religious education.

This fact can be proved by their desertion of their first mission station in Natal. After spending about ten years among the Zuluz without winning any converts, Bishop Allard and Fr. Gerard gave up the attempt and moved northwards into Lesotho. Bishop Allard has written the

---

4 Casalis, E. My Life in Basutoland. pp.227-9.

5 Dieterlen, G. Mareng a Meso (In the Dim of the Dawn) 1838-1848. 2nd Edn. Morija. Lesutho Book Depot. 1944. p.38.

6 Ibid. p.24 (translated from Sotho)

following on the matter:

> We have just abandoned the Mission of Our Lady of Seven Dolours; there as at St. Michael's the kaffirs have refused the divine seed that we wished to sow in their hearts...As soon as we shall have found places with some chance of success a mission will have to be opened and directed with utmost care. (7)

The Basotho were more co-operative and friendly, and seemed more likely to accept the faith. Referring to them Bishop Allard continued the same theme, conversion, but in another letter:

> The Basotho seem to us a people who do not take matters of religion lightly...If we do not deceive ourselves... if I say, such is the state of things among the people of Moshesh, we have great probability of finding an abundant harvest. (8)

That 'abundant harvest' is nothing short of conversion to Christianity is evident in the Bishops words:

> We have told them that they were far from the ways of salvation and all buried in sin and its darkness...We insist that they must be converted. (9)

Fr. Gerard was as impatient as his bishop, and wanted the Basotho to be converted without much delay:

> Oh Reverend Father, when, but when?...When shall we be able to tell you that the Basotho are becoming converted? (10)

It was soon clear to the Catholics that schools could be used as effective means of evangelization. The French Protestants, who had opened the way for education had already proved that. Their catechetical and teacher

---

7 Allard to Superior General in:St.George,H.Ibid.P.388

8 Ibid. p.392

9 Ibid. p.385

10 Fr.Gerard to Superior General in:Lebreton, H. Ibid. p.26

training schools at Morija offered good examples. The Catholics followed suit. J. Richard supports this:

> In keeping with the general trend of all Christian churches in Africa towards the end of the 19th Century, and more especially after the First World War, the Catholic Missionaries in Lesotho soon began to regard the school as one of the most efficacious ways of promoting evangelization.[11] (Translated from the French)

iii) The Anglicans

The Anglican mission was no exception in the matter of conversion as a priority. Widdicombe and his companion began a school at their first mission station in Leriba. The way Widdicombe describes the work of the schools shows clearly that, for him, as for the French Protestants and the Catholics, the school was intended to contribute greatly to the work of evangelization:

> The pressure of work upon my colleague and myself at this time was unusally great. The school, in every way the right hand of the mission, was without a master... (12)

R. Dove (1975) also includes in his description of the Anglican educational enterprise, a very unpleasant incident connected with the Anglican school in Leribe. It appears that some of the College boys had become Christians only for the educational benefits the Christian schools could offer. It was discovered that they practised their religion only during term time, but returned to the forbidden pagan customs during school holidays.[13] Further comment on the matter:

> It should be stated that they had no method of being educated except through Church

---

11 Richard, J. Ibid. p.60.

12 Widdicombe, J. Fourteen Years in Basutoland 1891. p. 274.

13 Dove, R. Ibid. pp 99 - 101.

> schools and that the churches did, in fact, obtain many converts through their schools.(14)

B. MORAL BEHAVIOUR

What seems to have struck the Basotho from the earliest days of Christianity in their country as most important in Christian teaching, is moral behaviour. This idea was transmitted to succeeding generations.

i) Evidence from P.E.M.S. writings

Dieterlen, quoting Arbousset says:

> The Basotho, unless I'm mistaken, understand well when told about Jesus self-sacrificing... but they still don't understand what is meant by conversion. They think our teaching in this respect is simply to encourage them to be more well behaved...(15)

According to Casalis, not only did Moshoeshoe think Christianity was aimed at promoting moral behaviour, but also that such moral conduct was generally easy to attain. He wrote:

> It was a great stumbling block to him when he heard that the nations which recognised Jesus Christ still loved war, and applied themselves to perfecting the military art. 'It was excusable in us' said he, 'who had no other models than wild beasts, but you who profess to be the children of Him who said 'Love your enemies', for you to take pleasure in fighting! (16)

Moshoeshoe was not surprised when he first heard the Ten Commandments; he remarked that these commandments were written in every man's heart.[17] Hence the reason why he and the people understood Christian teaching as aimed at moral behaviour.

---

14 Dove, R. Ibid.

15 Dieterlen, G. Ibid.p.38 (Translated from Sotho)

16 Casalis, E. My Life in Basutoland.1889 p.224

17 Ibid. p.222

ii) Evidence from Catholic writings

Similar idealistic reasoning is also evident in Fr. Gerard's reports. He writes that Moshoeshoe complained that after thirty years' teaching his people showed very little change in their moral behaviour, that he had hoped that they would change their ways and show more understanding of justice, refrain from theft, be more reliable and obedient. The teaching they had had till then, said the king, had not produced any moral effects. (18)

Apparently most of the people in Southern Africa at this particular period in history regarded morality as the aim and the expected outcome of Christian education. There is a newspaper description of a successful Anglican mission station at Spring Vale, quoted by a Catholic writer:

> It is a complete oasis in the wilderness of unclaimed nature. This is your first thought, but when you quit it, you will be more impressed with the important fact that it is a moral oasis in unreclaimed savagery that reigns far and wide around. (19)

iii) Evidence from Basotho writers

A study of the works of some of the first Basotho authors makes it clear that they considered Christian teaching as aimed primarily at moral improvement. The content of their writings is especially relevant here because, apart from being the first among the Basotho to write books, they were also former students of the first schools and for this reason, were much imbued with the religious education of those first secondary and teacher training schools of Lesotho.

---

18 Fr. Gerards letter to Superior General of the Oblates in: Lebreton, H. (Ibid) pp. 11 - 12

19 Article by 'G.H.W.' in the Natal Courier, 5 November, 1862 quoted in: St. George, H. Ibid. p.327

First among the Basotho writers is the famous Thomas Mofolo.[20] In his book Moeti oa Bochabela (Traveller to the East), he describes the spiritual development of Fekisi, a young man who was thirsting for God. It is an allegorical novel.

Fekisi has heard from his country folk that a spiritual Supreme Being exists, who is good and righteous. Yet he sees evil and corruption everywhere. The thought of a good God, and of man's response by evil, troubles Fekisi who is a virtuous young man. The thought worries him so much that eventually he decides to flee from his home and from the corruption he feels he can not stand any longer, to go and find the God he is longing for. He heads for the east, because according to the belief of his people, God is to be found at 'Ntsoana-tsatsi', a place somewhere in the east. After travelling for months through the land on foot, and by a chance boat over the sea, he arrives at a certain island. Everybody on this island is a Christian. The moral standard of the inhabitants is so high that there is no need to enforce law observances. Everyone is a good citizen, and all the people practise their religion. Fekisi is much impressed.

He goes to church for a service one day. While in deep prayer, Fekisi sees a vision. He moves towards the front of the church, his eyes fixed on what he alone can see. Suddenly he falls on his knees and dies peacefully with a smile on his face.

Another well known Sotho book is 'Makatulo'.[21] The heroine in this book is a young married woman called Makatulo. She abandons her home and her husband and goes to live a sinful miserable life in the townships near Johannesburg.

---

20 Mafolo, T. Moeti oa Bochabela, Morija Sesotho Book Depot. 1907.

21 Majara, S. Makotulo, 9th Edn. Catholic Book Centre. Mazenod. 1979.

After wasting her youth, her strength and her beauty on risky, loose living, Malotulo decides to return home to Lesotho, to Christianity and to a better moral life.

Pitseng[22] is another example. Moral behaviour is not only the theme in this book, but also forms the reason underlying each and every incident in it. The hero and the heroine, Alfred Phakoe and Aria Sebaka respectively, are exceptionally good and well behaved young people. The beauty of their moral life is matched by their physical and facial beauty. The characters with whom these two are contrasted are either very ugly, or have some moral defect. Both Alfred and Aria were educated at a church school, they are former students of Mr. Katse, an upright church minister, whose character and deeds had gained him much respect and popularity. The life story of both the major characters ends happily because they were good and upright..

These books, like many others in Sotho literature, reveal much with regard to the Basotho's view of the relationship between religion and morality. It could be said that most of the literature in Sotho is centred around moral behaviour, an aspect of Christian teaching that seems to have left the deepest impression in the minds of the Basotho.

C. THE EDUCATIONAL AIM

i) The P.E.M.S.

Although the main aim of missionary work was, obviously, to evangelize, many of the early missionaries also felt the need to provide the neophytes and the prospective converts with a solid foundation in Christian education.

---

22 Mofolo, T. Pitseng. Morija Book Depot. 12th Impr. 1978.

The fact that, in Lesotho, as in many other mission countries, especially in Africa, it was the missionaries and not the colonial governments who initiated formal academic education, proves that education was at least implied in their proclamation of the Gospel. Thus the very first missionary, Casalis, strove, even before he could speak the language of the people, to make his audience understand what he was trying to communicate:

> If they did not understand the words we used, our attitude, our gestures and the tone of our voice gave them some idea of the greatness and goodness of Him to whom we spoke. (23)

From what has been written about Mabille and his educational activities, it is apparent that the early missionaries were aware of the need to 'educate' as much as was possible in their time, and under the existing conditions. Mabille is described as an exceptionally good educator, who got to know the students' mental handicaps arising from their cultural background. For instance, their inability to comprehend time sequence in the Bible narratives. This awareness led him to remedy this defect which hindered a good understanding of the Bible.[24] Writers on the French Protestant mission also present Mabille as a devoted educator who always aimed at effective learning which he helped students to attain through patient work and effort and by giving students individual attention whenever possible.[25] All this was done with a view to enhance understanding, an integral part of education.

---

23 Casalis, E. Ibid. p.215.

24 Smith, E. (1939) The Mabilles of Basutoland.

25 Ibid.
Bianquis, J. Le Jubile de 1908. 1912
Jacottet, E. Histoire de la Mission du Lessouto 1912, both in Livre D'Or, Sections on education.

ii) The Catholic Mission

Early missionaries often found it necessary to lengthen the period of the catechumenate in order to ensure more understanding on the part of the neophytes. They learned from experience that hasty baptisms proved disastrous in the long run, and that more understanding was attained by allowing for a gradual, reflective learning. Writing about one of his converts, Fr. Gerard said:

> I have tested her for a long time at the catechumenate, a whole year. It's a new lesson to go slowly. It makes a strong conversion, tested for a long time. (26)
> (Translated from the French)

The missionaries' principal aim was conversion. Yet their purpose and intention was not to indoctrinate in the sense often used in educational parlance. This is true of all three denominations.

Bishop Allard and Fr. Gerard, the first Catholic missionaries in Lesotho, soon realized that the situation in 19th Century Lesotho required basic education. What the Basotho needed most at that time was health education and related skills like gardening, some knowledge of home economics, making clothes and general upliftment. Their first schools made a big effort to provide for the basic skills. The nuns who taught in these schools included religion in their programme, and it became part of the school's educational undertaking.[27] Hence the reason why many people among the Basotho especially in the past, tended to regard Christianity as part of Western education and Western civilization.

---

26 Fr. Gerard's Journal 19 Aug. 1867 in: Ferragne, M. Ibid. pp. 54 - 55

27 Lebreton, H. Ibid. pp. 1 - 5

iii) The Anglican Mission

The educational aims of the Anglicans matched those of the other missionaries. Widdicombe gives another example of education in connection with Christianity. He reminds that such education is more ecumenical than denominational, for it aims at a knowledge that is not confined to any one sect, but that is universal:

> In the presence of such an overwhelming mass of debasing heathenism as exists in Lesutho, any Christian agency is welcome. Better, a thousand times better, that the Basotho should be brought to the knowledge of the Redeemer in any way - whether by the agency of the most ultra montane Romanism, or by the efforts of the most extreme partisans of Calvinism - than that they should be suffered to remain a prey to the snares and delusions of wizards and rain doctors, without Christ and without the knowledge of God. (28)

This statement about 19th century Lesotho, by one of the early missionaries, shows that they were more aware of the importance of educating in religion than many people realize. Their emphasis on conversion did not blind them to the other important aims of religious instruction.

D. THE PRESENT SITUATION

That religious education has, since the time of the early missionaries tended to be geared to conversion is proved by the fact that in the 1960s many educators felt the need to move towards a more broad-minded, and more ecumenical approach to religious education at secondary school level. (Junior Certificate level).

Thus in 1968, the Theology Department of the then University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (U.B.L.S.)

---

28 Widdicombe, J. Ibid. 1891. p.67

headed by Rev. Fr. Denis Fahy, took the initiative in the development of an alternative syllabus. With the assistance of the educational secretaries of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, and of some well informed persons, a new syllabus for Religious Knowledge, as the subject came to be called, was drawn up for all secondary schools in the three countries. This syllabus, based on selected Bible texts, replaced the denominational syllabuses, which were decidedly sectarian and doctrinal in approach. Religious Knowledge became an examination subject so as to ensure that it is taught well, like other subjects in the school curriculum.

Though a break through, when all that has been described in the first three chapters of this study is considered, the Bible-based examination syllabus has not proved to be the final answer in religious education in Lesotho. There is still much uncertainty with regard to what should be the aim of such education. As has been hinted at in the introduction to this chapter, the aims which the first missionaries pursued in their evangelization undertaking are still evident in today's religious education in Lesotho. There is also no agreement as to what should be given more emphasis in the teaching of religion. Some teachers believe that the primary aim of religious knowledge is to nurture faith; others tend to regard moral behaviour as the aim; many of them also recognize the importance of educating in religious matters. In short, consensus has not yet been reached, for Religion teaching in the classroom could be geared either towards conversion, or moral behaviour, according to the teacher's choice.

In his research, carried out in 1974, Dlamini, T.[29] has a list of recommendations submitted by teachers who have been entrusted with religious education. These teachers

---

29 Dlamini, T. Unpublished B.A. dissertation.

call for a change of emphasis, and make an appeal to have 'greater ecumenical awareness' and have 'recognition of diversity in social and religious background.'[30]

J. Richard has also made a statement that more than half of the missionaries who took part in his research study still give the schools the first place among the instruments of conversion.[31]

The Regional Panel for Religious Knowledge has mentioned in the minutes of the meeting h[illegible]n 1982, that the task of the school is 'to purport, not to impose,' and has emphasized that provision should be made for choice in Religious Education, and even reasonable tolerance for dissent and revolt.[32] This implies that there are still considerable confessionalist tendencies which inhibit freedom of choice in religious matters.

More recently, in 1984, evidence was given, written and verbal, of the fact that some teachers and educators in Lesotho regard moral behaviour as the aim of religious education.[33] A new syllabus was agreed upon at a meeting of Religious Knowledge teachers, which would be tried in a few schools, and would, if it is found useful, be used as another alternative to the existing syllabus. This new syllabus - The Life Centred Approach - has moral behaviour, or [illegible]ceptable behaviour, as its principal aim.[34]

Moral behaviour was also given, in verbal expression and in writing, as the reason behind the Life Centred Approach syllabus.[35]

---

30 Dlamini, T. Ibid.

31 Richard, J. Ibid. p.110

32 Regional Panel for Religious Knowledge. Minutes of meeting at Kwaluseni, Swaziland 4th October, 1982

33 Report submitted by Sr.Joanne Wagner, at a meeting on 14 June,1984 in Maseru.(Same report as submitted to the Ministry of Education.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

It is these varied views which have given rise to the question: What should be the principal aim of religious education at Secondary School level in Lesotho?

To try to answer this question, the next three chapters of this study will review literature which deals with:

1. Conversion or faith nurturing;
2. moral instruction;
3. education; with special reference to the teaching of religion.

PART. II

DISCUSSION OF THE AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF CONTEMPORARY WRITING ON THIS TOPIC

CHAPTER 5

CONVERSION AS THE AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Relevant literature has revealed that writers on this theme[1] fall into two major opposing categories:

(a) those who maintain that religious education should aim primarily at conversion, but avoid coercion; and
(b) those who are opposed to conversion as the aim of religious education.

A. Writers who maintain that Religious Education should aim primarily at conversion, but avoid coercion:

1. Palmer, P. (1979)[2]

This writer seems to believe that religious instruction demands the conversion-aimed approach, and nothing else.

He bases his argument on St. Paul, using quotations from the Apostle's letters to back it. St. Paul is presented as a model for all those who teach religion in schools: "Whether we teach in the classroom or out, we can learn from Paul".

To emphasize this, every point in the argument is headed, in italics, by a quotation from St. Paul's letters. The points are specially chosen to show the uniqueness of Religious Education. Although it has something in common with other school subjects - in that it can be learned like any other - it has its own special character.

The way it should be approached seems to be one of its special characteristics. Palmer reminds that, originally, the title 'professor' was used for a teacher of religion, and that it meant 'confessor', that is one who confesses

---

1 'Conversion' meaning conversion to a faith, or from a bad to a good life.

2 'The Conversion of Knowledge', in: Religious Education. Vol. 74 No. 6. 1979. pp. 629-639.

or proclaims the faith. Like St. Paul, a religious teacher cannot be neutral, says Palmer.

St. Paul's teaching, because it was experiential, based on the never-to-be-forgotten encounter on the way to Damascus, could not be neutral. It was, on the contrary, made effective by the strength of his conviction. Palmer seems to imply that neutrality in religious education has no reason behind it other than doubt, on the part of the teacher.

The importance of St. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus also serves as an introduction to Palmer's discussion on experience with regard to religious education. He recommends the use of religious experiences in the teaching of religion, and compares these experiences with experiments in the sciences. Since like experiments, religious experiences give evidence, there is no need to be neutral, according to Palmer's reasoning. He does not go into details about the quality or credibility of religious experiences, nor does he say anything about their objective reality.

Palmer argues that religious education has to be related to life because religion begins with an experience. Otherwise, education becomes a substitute for experience for some students. Just because they have heard about love they think they know how to love; because they have heard about justice they think they have done justice. "When our teaching and learning get divorced from experiential knowledge, we foster the great illusion that to have thought about a thing is to have lived it". Thus Palmer's use of religious experience also involves putting religious teaching into practice.

2. E.T.T.A. (1974)[3]

The book is written for students at a Teacher Training College in North America.

It is relevant to this study because it concerns religion as taught in school, and not in Sunday School, and the teaching techniques it presents are based on given statements of aims - Religious Education aims.

According to this book a Religious Education teacher "must recognise and know his responsibility to lead each pupil to trust in Christ and accept him as personal saviour.... and the teacher should seek to bring pupils to a clear biblical faith in Jesus". There must be no coercion, but rather, spontaneous decisions which may come at the culmination of careful teaching.

Careful teaching, according to this book, means teaching prepared and planned to effect positive attitudes towards Christianity and all that it values.

Another aim of Religious Education is expressed as "nurturing faith". It is the duty of religious teachers, according to the joint authors of this book, to lead those who receive Christ to "continuous growth in Christian living". They stress the importance of worship, and that the teacher has to cultivate the worship experience through class sessions and church services.

Almost everything in the book - terms, illustrations, lesson arrangements - make it clear that lesson preparation and explicit aims are as important in Religious Education as in any other subject taught in classrooms.

The writers, unmistakably agents of a leading church denomination, regard the teaching of religion in their church schools as part of the church's mission.

---

3 Teaching Techniques - Guiding Principles for Church Teaching. Produced by the Evangelical Teacher Training Association. Wheaton. Illinois. 1974

3. Moran, G. (1966)[4]

The purpose of this book is to correct the tendency to base religious education entirely on past revelation. The thrust is on revelation as a continuing process. This does not, however, contradict the fact that the Christian God reveals himself in Holy Scripture more than in everything else, reminds Moran.

The terms 'catechesis', 'religious education' and 'Christian teaching' are used interchangeably throughout. The writer stresses that those who teach religion should never teach as though revelation was something of the past. It is precisely this emphasis on continuing revelation that makes Moran's book relevant to the present study. He insists that special emphasis be put on each student's history, and that of his community, as relevatory. He explains revelation as involving communion and an interpersonal relationship. This means, as Moran has stated it both implicitly and explicitly, that religious education has to enable students to come to know and accept Christ in their personal lives. One of his statements reads: "Since the student is to live now, to worship now, to be sanctified now, he must know God revealing himself now". [5]

While maintaining that commitment to Christ is the aim of religious education, there is stress that the freedom of the student must be respected. "What we hope to have eventually is freely committed Christian people who express their freedom by joining with the worshipping community".[6]

Though the whole book, content as well as title, suggests option for Christ, and for his values, it warns against

---

4 God Still Speaks. The Basis of Christian Education. London. Burns & Oates.

5 p. 69

6 p. 104.

any direct means of inviting students to the faith. "Catholic religious education, therefore, is not the formation of one person by another along precise and rigid lines of what constitutes the ideal life. It is rather the guiding of a partner in conversation to discover what he alone can discover and what he alone can put into operation". [7]

After stating that 'committed Christian people' is what religious education hopes to achieve, Moran edds:

> ...But painful as the fact may be, there is no way that one can directly make this come about. (8)

Thus, according to Moran, the aim of religious teaching is a positive response to God through Christ. This response is arrived at through indirect means used by the teacher, end by freedom of choice on the part of the student.

4. Sheed, F. (1973)[9]

The writer addresses a situation brought about by those who have been engaged in efforts that have lessened the promotion and spreading of Christianity.

He sees, in this situation, a growing rate of indifference to the Christian religion and a rapid increase of de-Christianization agencies, and outstanding among these are certain writings. Influenced by these writings many teachers avoid mentioning the symbols of the Christian religion during class periods, with the result that the lessons lack substance.[10]

With this information as starting point, the writer presents his own views on what religious education should be, and his suggestions.

In his view, religious education needs to engage in some

---

7 Moran, G. Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Christ in the Classroom. London. Sheed & Ward.
10 Ibid. pp. 1 - 2

revival work, necessitated by the fact that Jesus and his memory begin to fade from people's minds. He is hardly mentioned during religion classes in many secondary and high schools in Britain, because of "some would-be biblical scholars and theologians". Their different interpretations of the Jesus of the Gospels have caused a confusion verging on the chaotic, for each seems to interpret the Gospels in the light of his own philosophy. Sheed does not mention the names of the writers he is referring to; neither does he give an example of their erroneous interpretations. His major emphasis is on the confusion that has been caused among teachers, many of whom - since they are not scholars themselves - have to rely on other people's interpretations, and often make use of them without scrutiny.[11]

What is of more relevance to the present study is his remedy for the situation he has described. He wants to re-awaken interest and faith in Jesus by making the Jesus of the Gospels, and not that of the 'interpreters' the central theme of the book. He picks out phrases and expressions which best depict Jesus' character and what he stands for, then comments on them. A section headed 'discussion' follows, in which the writer advises teachers and shows them how to handle the material containing the key phrases and expressions. The presentation is clear and captivating.

Sheed, having implied it in his introductory statements, defines the aim of religious education as "to prepare pupils for life in Christ". The teacher's concern is how pupils are responding to Christ; not only how they are growing in the knowledge of him, but also in the realization of "what in fact he means to them, and the intensity of this meaning".[12]

---

11 Ibid
12 Ibid

Sheed encourages a thorough knowledge of Jesus' character. He should be studied as one would study Abraham Lincoln in the history class, or Hamlet in the English literature class. Otherwise no one can claim that he knows him. This argument, on the lack of knowledge of Jesus, is the major thrust in the book, and the focus of attention. The suggestion is that many of those who interpret the Jesus of the Gospels, and those who are beginning to ignore Jesus because of what the interpreters have said, need to study Jesus more closely. If this is not done the danger is that many conclusions will be based on inadequate study, or even on ignorance or erroneous information.

Towards the end of the book, sex, money, death and the church are brought in, and related to Jesus' teaching. The presentation is lively, scripture-based, and not dogmatic.

The writer states more than once, and in slightly different ways, that the purpose of all this information, and of the book as a whole, is "to help the student, in the measure of his own personal maturing, to grow in intimacy with Christ, and in the understanding of the light he sheds on God and human life". [13]

B. Writers who are opposed to conversion as the aim of religious education:

1. Johns, E. (1981)[14]

This article, based on Religious Education in Britain, begins by reminding readers that the justification for the inclusion of Religious Education in the school curriculum has to be based on educational principles; that it has to be educationally acceptable.

---

13 Sheed, F. Ibid. p.60

14 'The Unacceptable Aim of Religious Education' in: B.J.R.E. Vol. 4 No. 1. Autumn 1981 pp. 28 - 30

The aim to induce, or foster, or nurture faith is not acceptable in education. For this reason, Johns is very happy with the 'World Religions Syllabus', because it is based on neutrality. He states:

> There are, however, sympathizers with the old confessional approach who, consciously or unconsciously, still wish to evangelize rather than educate...the confessional aim is unacceptable. (15)

The reason given for this, and for the writer's preference for the objective approach of the World Religions Syllabus is the freedom of the individual, which has to be safeguarded. He criticizes those who find that something has been lost with the introduction of the newly adopted neutral approach. Such people wish to re-introduce a confessional element by insisting that an uncommitted teacher cannot provide the 'primary source'.[16]

Against these discontents, the writer argues that pupils would not be able to make their choice when faced with an adult who shows some commitment to a particular idea of religion, or to a particular church denomination. This is also his answer to Edward Hulmes argument that a pupil who wants to know which religion is right is helped more by a teacher who declares his belief than by the teacher "whose studied neutrality is in effect the expression of an impartiality which is alien to his deepest conviction".[17] Eric Johns is against the use of experiences in religious education. To those who think that the new syllabus lacks meaningful religious experiences, he responds by saying that the inclusion of such experiences would be to transgress the bounds of education; that the pupils' option must remain free. He adds to this, and mentions that the desire to introduce direct religious experience

---

15 Ibid. p.28
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid. p.29.

into the classroom is suspect on epistemological and educational grounds:

> It seems to reflect the wish to convince pupils that truth lies somewhere in the religious realm, rather than leaving that judgement to the pupils themselves. (18)

2. Hull, J. (1975)[19]

The main theme of this book is the relationship between religion and education, both historically and conceptually. The theme is developed in the context of the role of school assembly in the present age.

Though not directly concerned with religious education, the book has some relevance to this study because the author dwells much on the religious aspect of school assemblies and their impact on the student's beliefs and religious sentiments. These assemblies seem to suggest "a recommendation for the Christian religion, or rather for religious belief".

Apart from this, Hull's conclusion that state school worship is incompatible with educational values, is in line with the ideas of the advocates of the objective approach and the neutral handling of religious material.

According to Hull, worship, in the history and literature of school assembly, is understood as an explicit, direct response to God, who has the right to the loyalty of the believer. It is saying 'Yes' to God, and therefore entails the belief that God exists and that he is worth saying 'Yes' to. During ordinary worship, he states, this belief is assumed (rather than reflected on), and, if it is not, the unconditional surrender to God, which is implicit in worship is impaired. This argument is used to high-light the fact that organisers of school assem-

---

18 Johns, E. Ibid.

19 School Worship: An Obituary. S.C.M. Press.

blies assume that all school children are believers, and, perhaps a more important reason, they make students assume that religious belief has to be accepted at face value.

What makes worship unsuitable in educational institutions is the fact that present day society is pluralist. Not everyone is a believer, or a potential believer, so Hull does not hesitate to state that any attempt to inculcate religious commitment through school assembly is inconsistent with educational values.

In his other work 'New Directions in Religious Education'[20] Hull expresses the same opinion making it clear that Religious Education is not for conversion or for nurturing faith, directly or indirectly.

In this article he traces the development of religious education in Britain from 1944. In line with John Stuart Mill's vision the state still refuses to be involved in any attempt to influence the minds of children on disputed questions of religion, not only from the clause forbidding denominational intrusion, but also in the requirement that religious education be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus.[21]

What Hull thinks is best is religious education appropriate to the common schools of a pluralistic and freedom loving democracy in which a wide variety of beliefs and values exist, and not the sectarian kind.

Hull reminds his readers that John Stuart Mill has predicted the worst in the religious education which was to come, namely, a religions education consisting of inert facts unrelated to pupils' lives, one which becomes falsely academic instead of truly liberating, and which has failed to confront pupils with the rich religious experience of humanity.[22]

---

20 'New Directions in Religious Education' in: Religious Education, Vol. 75 No. 3.Summer 1988 pp. 391 - 397

21 Ibid

22 Ibid

Hull recalls that Harold Loukes made an effort to introduce an experiential but not proselytizing religious education, especially in his book Teenage Religion. This effort is approved of and praised by Hull. He also affirms that Louke's approach is more typical of what goes on in many schools in Britain, than the more recent, and controversial, World Religion Syllabus.

Yet towards the end of his article, Hull shows his preference for the World Religion Syllabuses, describing them thus: "They no longer foster or nurture faith in any particular religion, but promote a systematic but critical understanding of religion",[23] and he describes the change that has been effected by the introduction of the World Religion Syllabuses. The teacher, he reports, seeks to discover his curriculum and his method from educational theory, and not from the religious teaching of the churches, or from the polemics of the religions themselves.[24]

3. Rossiter, G. (1982)[25]

The writer begins the article by naming and describing different approaches in religious education used in Catholic schools in Australia. The most popular of these are ennumerated as: 1. The subject-oriented, which uses an open, inquiring style; the teacher may refer to his own personal faith when he feels it appropriate, but does not try to impose this view on students. 2. Authority-oriented, in which the teaching is dominated by the teacher's sense of ministry. Foremost in the teacher's mind is the handing on of the faith; the students perceive the main thrust of religion teaching as trying to make them more Christian; there is a constant stress on the church's authority. 3. Life Discussion, in which the

---

23 Hull, J. Ibid. p.696

24 Ibid

25 'Diversity in Curriculum in Religious Education in Catholic Schools in Australia.' in: B.J.R.E. Vol. 4 No. 2, Spring, 1982. pp. 88 - 97.

teacher sees a religious education period as an opportunity for discussing a wide range of issues and social problems; here, religious education is more life oriented.

4. The Phenomenological Approach, which uses the World Religion Syllabus approach - an objective study of world religions that is wholy descriptive and requires a suspension of value judgement.

Rossiter gives no opinion on any of these teaching methods and his reason for listing and describing them is to draw the reader's attention to the situation that has attracted his notice. He views the different approaches as indicating uncertainty, and suggesting a possible problem with confusion of purposes - a confusion over the nature of religious education and what it should be aiming at.

From this apparent confusion Rossiter singles out the Authority-oriented approach as the one that calls for immediate attention. It is precisely at this point that the article becomes more relevant to this study. He says the conversion-oriented style is unsuitable, especially at secondary and high school levels for this reason: It can lead to vagueness or confusion in the minds of teachers; they can become so concerned about 'handing on the faith' that they neglect the teaching of religion. Where religious education is school based, Rossiter argues, it should be basically in tune with the normal educational practice of that setting.

C. Comment

The writers under A, above, argue that Jesus and Christianity deserve acceptance; and they believe that this can be done without infringing upon the freedom of the students as long as teachers do not use coercion.

The writers listed under B are against the view expressed by the first group. According to their view, there is no way of recommending Jesus and Christianity without risking the student's freedom of choice in religious matters.

In fact, the arguments seem to be centred on freedom on both sides. The argument of the writers under A is that religious education should help to bring about a relationship between God, or Jesus, and the student. The implication here is that the student has a right to freedom to live his religion, and to know more about his God, and that a secular way of life be not over emphasized at the expense of religion. The writers under B argue, on the other hand, that the freedom of students who are inclined to a secular way of life can be tampered with if religious education remains confessional in approach. Thus the whole argument involves the nature of religion and the freedom of a person.

With the above considerations in mind, this study contends that while maintaining the nature of religion, Religious Education needs to define its aims according to the nature and the aspirations of the society it has in view. This will, at least to a great extent, solve the question of freedom in religious matters. Hence this study's views:

1. Against a conversion-aimed Religious Education:

This study maintains that the school is not the place for evangelization. That would be very unsuitable in a setting where thinking, reasoning and critical judgement should feature much more than mere belief. Evangelization, or aiming at conversion, implies more advocacy than allowing scope for reasoning and critical judgement. This seems contrary to the aims and purpose of an educational institution. This study agrees with the writers under B, above, on this point.

2. Social Structure and Religion:

The arguments of the writers under B, above, are based, generally, on the nature of society, namely, a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic kind of society. Hence the weight of their argument.

In fact, the arguments seem to be centred on freedom on both sides. The argument of the writers under A is that religious education should help to bring about a relationship between God, or Jesus, and the student. The implication here is that the student has a right to freedom to live his religion, and to know more about his God, and that a secular way of life be not over emphasized at the expense of religion. The writers under B argue, on the other hand, that the freedom of students who are inclined to a secular way of life can be tampered with if religious education remains confessional in approach. Thus the whole argument involves the nature of religion and the freedom of a person.

With the above considerations in mind, this study contends that while maintaining the nature of religion, Religious Education needs to define its aims according to the nature and the aspirations of the society it has in view. This will, at least to a great extent, solve the question of freedom in religious matters. Hence this study's views:

1. Against a conversion-aimed Religious Education:

This study maintains that the school is not the place for evangelizatio: That would be very unsuitable in a setting where thinking, reasoning and critical judgement should feature much more then mere belief. Evangelization, or aiming at conversion, implies more advocacy than a lowing scope for reasoning and critical judgement. This seems contrary to the aims and purpose of an educational institution. This study agrees with the writers under B, above, on this point.

2. Social Structure and Religion:

The arguments of the writers under B, above, are based, generally, on the nature of society, namely, a multicultural, multi-ethnic kind of society. Hence the weight of their argument.

The school is meant to offer education. Since education is a social process, it must consider the particular character of the society in which that process takes place - its culture and civilization, its structure and values. Hence the need to have a more objective and descriptive, World Religions Syllabus to suit the nature of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and pluralistic society.

With the same consideration for the nature of society, the moderate views of the writers under the A category are acceptable in a predominantly Christian society. In such a society, emphasis on the person of Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity and its major symbol, and on the reasons for his importance, would not necessarily imply indoctrination. In a school situation, such emphasis on Jesus will also leave room for critical judgement, for the use of reason and evaluation of available evidence.

3. Educational Psychology:

There has been more emphasis in education on a child centred as against a subject centred approach in the present century. This facilitates learning, if used discriminately.[26] A conversion-aimed approach to the teaching of religion can be ruled out also on this basis, for it implies a subject centred approach which disregards other considerations, but treats school children much like a 19th century mission field that had to be converted at all costs.

On the other hand, it is also in accordance with educational psychology that the school, its culture, environment and values coincide, more or less, with what obtains in the home and in society. In other words, the school has to speak the same language, literally, as well

---

26 Peters, R. (1966) pp. 35-48

as metaphorically, as that of society. This applies to the teaching of religion: Since Christianity is more relevant in a predominantly Christian environment than in a pluralistic, multi-cultural society, its symbols and values can be emphasized more in the former situation than in the latter.

CHAPTER 6

MORALITY AS THE AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It has been shown in Chapter 4 that there is also a tendency to regard, or to treat morality as though it was the primary aim of Religious Education. For this reason it became necessary to review literature related to this theme. In the literature reviewed the general meaning of 'moral' is ethical conduct. The writers also use 'morality' as meaning good conduct.

On the question whether moral behaviour is the most important aim of religious education, writers are divided, as in the case of conversion, treated in the previous chapter. They seem to fall into the following groups:

a) those who maintain that religious education and morality are intimately related, hence to aim primarily at moral conduct is what is expected and characteristic of religious education;
b) those who see religion as providing a good support for moral conduct, but do not regard morality as the aim of religious education;
c) those who think that religious education and morality are independent of each other, therefore religious education should not aim at teaching moral behaviour.

A. The view that religious education and morality are intimately related, hence to aim primarily at moral conduct is expected and characteristic of religious education.

1. Garrison, K. et al (1968)[1]

This book is a study of the psychological development in childhood, and the role of the environment in this development. Chapter 9 describes the development of moral and ethical behaviour, and the contribution of religious

---

1 The Psychology of Childhood - A Study of Development and Socialization. London. Staples Press.

education in this respect. Hence its relevance to the question which this chapter seeks to answer.

The authors claim that religious education aims at character development. "The immediate goals of religious education lie in the presentation of abstract concepts of right and wrong behaviour.."[2] They develop on this point and include that a value must have meaning for the child before it can become a working part of his character. It must be related to his needs and to his personality development. Its relationship to the various levels of human aspirations must be made clear to him.

It is expressed explicitly that religious education is a principal agent for familiarizing and educating in morals, but the joint authors are, nevertheless, aware that teaching a child dogmas, creeds or rules of conduct is insufficient. This is because the knowledge of what is right or wrong does not necessarily ensure moral conduct consistent with it. The extent to which such knowledge functions as an inhibiter depends upon the nature of the child's insights and conscience, his opportunities to practise correct behaviour under favourable rewarding conditions, and the strength of temptation in terms of his needs and drives.

Chapter 9 of this book also mentions the harmful contradictions to which children are exposed. Moral teaching can be far divorced from the every day experiences of childhood. Many of them develop guilt feeling and anxiety neuroses because they are commanded to honour a father or mother who are, to their children and to society at large, obviously unworthy of honour. In this context Garrison et al allude to the unfriendly relations that sometimes exist between churches, which the present study

---

2 Garrison, K. Ibid. Chap. 9.

has also described at length in the second and third chapters. The authors point out that more often than not, discrepancies arise between concept and conduct in ecclesiastical institutions. "The churches speak about the brotherhood of man...yet individual denominations exercise varying degrees and kinds of discrimination against one another."[3] These practices not only raise serious contradictions but also detract from the effectiveness of the moral education they purport to promote.

After emphasizing, once more, the role of religious education in character formation through moral education, the authors mention an experiment cited by Berkowitz[4] which shows that parochial school children give mature responses to moral questions at an earlier age than public school children. They include the experiment's subsequent speculation that the earlier maturing may come about because the Roman Catholic Church, for example, requires a child over seven years of age to consider the difference between 'accident' and 'intent' in order that he may decide what should be confessed. The inclusion of this experiment shows that the authors, although aware of the problems involved, still hold firm to the view that religious education is primarily concerned with moral behaviour, and how it can be promoted.

For them, this has to be so, for as they have observed: "Every act, example, word, story, pageant, celebration, is devoted to teaching the moral and ethical behaviour necessary for the attainment of man's highest spiritual goals in all established religions".[5]

---

3 Garrison, K. Ibid. Chapter 9.

4 Berkowitz, L. The Development of Motives and Values in the Child. Basic Books.

5 Garrison, K. Ibid.

2. Miller. D. (1979) [6]

The article seeks to establish that religion is typically based on culture, and that what is designed for a community should not be made to apply to the whole world with its diversity of cultures. Miller lays much stress on the relationship between religion and community, and on the goals of a religion viewed in this light.

He says that morality and values are part and parcel of religion and hence of religious education. The goal of such education is to transform perception according to a communal world view which unites the past with the present, and the individual with the anticipated future of the community. The implication here is that religious education aims at moral behaviour, since what is of utmost importance in a community or a society are norms, or rules of acceptable conduct.

This article becomes even more relevant to the theme of this chapter when he argues that theologians and, possibly many educators put too much emphasis on the theoretical aspect of religion while neglecting the social and the practical dimensions. If they could correct this imbalance, says Miller, then it would become much clearer that "religious education is much more a matter of acculturation, with formal moments of instruction being a link in the chain of the longer process."[7] He reminds those who teach religion in schools that they have a more subtle task "to incorporate individuals into the life of the community in order that they may be shaped by the symbolic forms (as well as by the people) who comprise the community." [8] The whole argument is a clear indication that religious education is specifically aiming at acceptable moral conduct and prepares the young for life in society.

---

6 Religious Education and Cultural Pluralism in: Religious Education. Vol.74.No.4. 1979 pp.339-349

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

3. O'Hare, P. (1980)[9]

In his essay, Padraic O'Hare applies certain insights drawn from the ethical realism of Reinhold Niebuhr to the practice of education for social justice.

Most relevant to the question under study is the part in which the relationship between religion and social justice is shown. He traces this relationship from the beginning of Christian teaching, and argues that for Jews and Christians, the habit of relating the ethical and the religious is as old as their sacred writings, that it is social ethics, and not only personal morality which are deemed a necessary outcome of religious conviction. Thus ancient Israel knew little distinction between individual and social ethics, and he quotes the prophet Amos to prove it: "I hate, I despise your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals...But let justice flow like water, and integrity like an unfailing stream..."[10] He thinks Jesus had the same view on religion and ethics as the Old Testament writers, for he demanded that the gift be left at the alter until one has made peace with one's sister or brother.

O'Hare says ethics cannot do without religion. Morality needs the motivational power of religious warrant for ethical behaviour. Yet religion, or belief in God, is the dominant force. Quoting R. S. Peters in Reason he points out that religion has the function of endorsing and of emphasizing one or another of the fundamental principles of morality by placing its operation in a setting which awakens awe.

Readers are reminded that the identification of religious and ethical education is an old idea with roots in the

---

9 Religious Education for Social Justice in: Religious Education. Vol. 75 No.1 (1980).

10 Amos 5: 21 - 24

concern for social justice within the Christian Church. To show that this is what he maintains, he gives the advantages of identifying religious and ethical education. Where the spirit underlying this approach holds sway, two powerful correctives are ensured: "religious education is weaned from destructive individualism and exclusive preoccupation with doctrinal transmission; and moral education is infused with a normative and ideal element and saved from the banal fate of mere value clarification." [11]

Thus O'Hare, like the other writers reviewed in this group thinks religious education should aim at moral behaviour.

B. The view that Religion provides a good support for morality, but Religious Education does not aim primarily at moral education.

1. Moran, G. (1966) [12]

This book deals with revelation as the basis of religious education. The question of morality is treated briefly in chapters 5 and 8.

In chapter 5, Moran makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the centre of religious education. If Christ is both the content and the centre of every religion lesson, as Moran claims he is, it follows that to know Jesus Christ is the aim of Religious Education, and not anything else:

> If Jesus is the fullness of revelation and the center of our religion, then it is through an intimacy with him that all other things in the Christian life are to be understood. Children should learn of him without first having to go through a multiplicity of doctrines on Adam and Eve, Original Sin, angels and devils. (13)

---

11 O'Hare, P. Ibid.

12 God Still Speaks - The Basis of Christian Education London, Burns and Oates. 1966. Chapters 5 and 8.

13 Ibid. p.61.

After establishing that knowledge of, and personal relationship with Christ is the aim of religious education, Gabriel Moran focuses his attention on the student, especially in Chapter 8. The major thrust here is how to make Christian teaching more comprehensible to the student. He maintains that a teaching centred upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ would give moral teaching an orientation that would dissolve most of the questions on which time is wasted in teaching morality. It is here that this book becomes more relevant to the chapter sub-divisions above, suggesting as it does that moral behaviour and moral teaching get their vigour from religion with Jesus Christ as its centre.

Moran's view is that Christian morality is not to be presented as a series of abstract laws placed mechanically upon 'cases', but needs to be man's creative response to historical situations through his understanding of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and of his continued working in the Church. Morality will not only result, but will find support in the understanding of who Christ is, and what he stands for.[14]

2. Schneiders, A. (1951)[15]

Chapter XVI of this book deals with moral and religious development during adolescence.

Schneiders argues that religion and morality become indissoluble when these dimensions are regulated by values, principles and ideals; that they are rooted in a personal system of values. The argument becomes relevant to the theme of this chapter where a connection is drawn between them. He states that if we were to ask what makes moral conduct valuable we would find that it

---

14 Moran, G. Ibid. p.107.

15 The Psychology of Adolescence. Milwaukee. Bruce Publishing Co. 1951.

lies to a great extent in religious values. One can be moral for personal or social reasons, but is likely to fail in crucial situations. If, however, one knows that by being moral one contributes to one's own future welfare or destiny, and activates relationship to God at the same time, then moral values take on added meaning and dynamic power. Thus Schneiders, like Moran reviewed in 1. above sees religion as providing a good support for morality.

He aoso does not consider morality as the aim of religious education. He states explicitly that the goal of religious instruction should be a clear grasp of religious concepts and principles and of their relation to the practices of religion.

When emphasizing how much morality relies on religion for support he goes to the extent of saying that materialistic and atheistic conceptions are destructive of morality. For him, morality loses some of its intrinsic qualities when viewed outside the context of religion. But this is debatable, since it is a well known fact that high moral standards can be found among pagans and unbelievers. The thrust of the argument is that a truly religious spirit supports moral action; yet this does not mean that religious education aims, or should aim, at moral behaviour.

C. The view that Religious Education and Morality are independent of each other; Religious Education must not have moral behaviour as its principal aim.

1. Hirst, P. (1974) [16]

The greater part of this book is devoted to a philosophical description of moral behaviour and moral education. The gist of all that is said shows, among other

---

16 Moral Education in a Secular Society. University of London Press. 1974.

things, that there is much in common between the Christian and the secularist approaches to morality.

Moral education is described as concerned with cognitive and affective factors - problems of relationships, influences of the home and of the wider environment. Hirst begins by drawing attention to the secularization of society and by showing that religious institutions of all kinds are no longer of central significance.

Much stress is laid on moral education with regard to secular society, that is, on morality studied independently of religious education. He insists that religion is not moral education, as such, hence Religious Education has no need to aim primarily at moral behaviour. He proceeds by making an outline of the secular approach to moral education. His discussions are compelling, challenging and even provocative in some instances.

He sees morality as arising from the environment in which man finds himself, and, consequently, cannot be conceived as existing independently; it is not sui generis. He mentions that learnt dispositions may affect what we feel guilty about and, in this sense, conscience has a social basis.

This is a relativistic approach to morality, though he does not say anything explicitly about relativising morality, or of advocating for a situation ethic.

Hirst admits finally that there are problems encountered in moral education, and that, up to now, very little is known about the level of understanding necessary to achieve the ends of moral education. He includes a moderate criticism of Kohlberg's use of moral dilemmas and of his methodology; but he accepts his conclusions in general.

Hirst mentions some of the aims of moral education, which are not dependent on, nor have anything to do with religion. He states explicitly that moral

education should not be tied up with religion, for this would make it unpalatable to people who prefer a secular way of life. Thus for Hirst, moral education is independent of religious education, and is a discipline in its own right. If this is recognised, then why should religious education aim specifically at moral behaviour.

2. Meakin, D. (1979)[17]

The purpose of this article is to appraise, and contradict the arguments used to justify the inclusion of Religious Education in the school curriculum. Consequently, the writer discusses critically some of the arguments advanced to support Religious Education.

Meakin has selected for criticism the Moral Education Argument of Edwin Cox[18] which puts the question; 'What is right conduct?' and involves a discussion of such things as 'What is life, what is it for?' 'Is it right to inflict pain?' etc. A full consideration of such questions, said Cox, would include taking cognisance of what the great world religions have said about them, thus departing from the field of ethics into that of religion.

Meakin disagrees with the above statement, for he sees it as implying that religion is the basis and ultimate purpose of moral conduct. He points out that a person can be morally educated without taking any note of religion, and this places him in Group C of this chapter. Clearly, Cox thinks religious education is necessary for teaching moral behaviour, and Meakin on the other hand maintains that it is desirable, in fact better, to be educated in morals without any recourse to religious education or to religion because if moral education is made to seem dependent on religion, someone giving up religion might

---

17 The Justification of Religious Education in B.J.R.E. Vol.2 No. 2. 1979. pp. 49 - 55.

18 Cox, E. Changing Aims of Religious Education London. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1966.

abandon moral principles along with it. Though this argument does not carry much weight, it shows that Meakin's view that morality, though interwoven with religion, is logically independent of it and that moral education is logically and practically possible without it.

For this reason, Meakin, like Hirst in 1. above, is opposed to the idea that religious education has, as its purpose and primary aim, education in moral behaviour. He sees religious and moral education as totally independent of each other, and cannot accept that religious education aims primarily at teaching moral conduct.

He does not give a treatise on morality, but just a reply to those who advocate for religious education. Apart from his reply there is very little argument in his article.

D. A Critique:

of those who maintain that religious education and morality are intimately related, hence to aim primarily at moral conduct is expected and characteristic of religious education. (Group A.)

Their arguments:

All three writers have exaggerated some aspect of the relationship between morality and religion in order to justify their views.

To make the reader accept their view, Garrison et al. state that every act, example, word, story, pageant and celebration in religion is devoted to teaching the moral and ethical behaviour necessary for the attainment of man's highest spiritual goals.[19] This is an erroneous interpretation of what religion means. It results from exaggerating the role of moral education in the teaching of religion.

In Christianity moral conduct follows from belief in the God of holiness.

---

19 Last paragraph Garrison review. p. 87

Miller also exaggerates in saying that religion is nothing but acculturation and explaining it in terms of norms designed for a particular community.[20] This may be true in one sense when considering certain things in religion that are undoubtedly part of a nation's culture like circumcision in the Jewish religion. Other things, like 'honesty', 'not to steal', 'not to commit murder', 'adultery', and other moral rules can hardly be explained as belonging to a particular culture. Thus, to generalize in this case, and ascribe moral education in religion to a particular community, is misleading. There is some objectivity about moral rules for many of them have the backing of reason, and to observe them is a matter of common sense.

Thus Peters refers to certain moral rules as basic; those which are in anyone's interest whatever his conception of the good life may be. "Rules like those prohibiting injury to the person, theft, lying, and the breaking of contracts are necessary for the life of a school as well as for that of any other community."[21]

O'Hare rephrases Miller's idea when he says that it is social ethics, and not just personal morality which are deemed a necessary outcome of religious conviction.[22] He is exaggerating when he says that in the Christian Church religious education is identified with ethical education.[23] This statement describes a situation where there is an undue emphasis on moral teaching, with the result that religion becomes equated with morality. It is not a description of an ideal religious education in the Christian Church. Gabriel Moran has pointed out

---

20 Last paragraph Miller. p.88

21 Peters, R. Ethics and Education. London. Allen & Unwin. 1966. p.202.

22 O'Hare, second paragraph. p.89

23 O'Hare, fourth paragraph. p.89

this tendency to over-emphasize moral conduct in religious education: "In actual fact, it would seem that religion books, and religion teachers have never been wanting ir exhortations to avoid sin...in maintaining strong external discipline, and so forth...On the other hand, we have never had in the teaching of religion too much concentration upon knowledge and understanding; we have had only too little of it."[24] He defines the chief interest of both Christian theology and religious education as the reveletion of God in Jesus Christ.[25]

Another definition of religion is given by Galloway: "Religion is that which refers to Man's faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability of life, and which he expresses in acts of worship and service."[26] Thouless describes it as "a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a superhuman being or beings."[27]
All these definitions say very little about moral conduct; so it seems unlikely that in an ideal situation we would find religion equated with, or identified with, morality.

It could be said therefore, that O'Hare, when he identifies religious with ethical education, is led by his zeal to support his argument for social justice.

This study argues as follows:

Garrison et al. have stated that "a value must have meaning for the child before it can become a working part of his character...it must be related to his personality development" and after such a statement, they still

---

24 Moran, G. Ibid. p.41.

25 Ibid. p.39.

26 Galloway, G. The Philosophy of Religion.1914 p.184

27 Thouless, R. An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion. Cambridge University Press.1966 pp.3-4

28 First paragraph Garrison p. 85

maintain that religious education is specifically aiming at moral conduct, and is expected to do exactly that.

The present study contends, on the contrary, that religious education, because it was not meant for such a purpose, is not likely to teach moral behaviour adequately.

1. The issues involved in moral education are more psychological than philosophical, and still less religious. Habit, for instance, plays a big role in moral education. Thus the habit of earning one's livelihood prevents many people from stealing. It forms a firm foundation for any subsequent teaching on morality. Without this foundation, moral teaching often falls on deaf ears. In other words, habit leads to reason in this respect, as Peters has stated.[29] A child has to watch others, do as they do, form a habit, then use his reason. Like most difficult things in life, moral conduct is probably acquired by some process of apprenticeship, says Peters.[30]

2. Like all learning based on psychological principles, moral education has to consider readiness on the part of the learner. The Bible, however, is not a child's book. The moral teaching in religious texts does not take the developmental stages into account. The texts were not meant for moral education. Knowledge of right and wrong and the ability to control impulses develop slowly, and there are great individual differences in the rate of development. Any teacher, says Peters, must be very careful not to expect the same standards of behaviour from children of different ages - their strength of character may be undeveloped in relation to their cognitive development.[31] The writers revieved seem to

---

29 Peters, R. Ibid. p.313.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid. p.288.

have paid little notice of the importance of mental development in moral education when they argued that religious education is to aim primarily at moral education. Hence the following point in this study's argument, namely a look at Kohlberg's Moral Judgement Stages:[32] he identifies six stages, two of which occur at three distinct levels - the pre-conventional, the conventional and the post-conventional.

Preconventional Level:

At this level the child is responsive to cultural rules, to labels of good and bad, right or wrong, but interprets them in terms of either physical or the hedonistic consequences of action (punishment, reward, exchange of favours) or in terms of the physical power of those who enunciate the rules and labels. This level is divided into two stages:

Stage 1: The Punishment and Obedience Orientation:
The physical consequences of action determine its goodness or badness regardless of the human meaning or value of these consequences. Avoidance of punishment and unquestioning deference to power are valued in their own right, not in terms of respect for the underlying moral order supported by punishment and authority.

Stage 2: The Instrumental Relativist Orientation:
Right action consists of that which instrumentally satisfies one's own needs and occasionally the needs of others.

Conventional Level

Maintaining the expectations of the individual's family, group or nation is perceived as valuable in its own right, regardless of immediate or obvious consequences, and it is in two stages:

---

32 Kohlberg, L. Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education in Moral Education, Interdisciplinary Approaches. pp 86 - 88.

Stage 3: The Interpersonal Concordance of 'Good Boy' 'Nice Girl' Orientation:
Good behaviour is that which pleases or helps others, and is approved by them. There is much conformity to stereotypical images of what is majority or 'natural' behaviour.
Stage 4: The Law and Order Orientation:
There is orientation toward authority, fixed rules, and the maintenance of the social order. Right behaviour consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.

Post-Conventional, Autonomous or Principled Level:
At this level, there is a clear effort to define moral values and principles which have validity and application apart from the authority of the groups or persons holding these principles and apart from the individual's own identification with these groups. Again there are two stages:
Stage 5: The Social-Contract Legalistic Orientation:
Generally with utilitarian overtones, right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and in terms of standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. There is a clear awareness of the relativism of personal values and opinions, and a corresponding emphasis upon procedural rules for reaching consensus. Aside form what is constitutionally and democratically agreed upon, the right is a matter of personal values and opinions. The result is an emphasis upon the legal point of view, but with an emphasis upon the possibility of changing law in terms of rational consideration of social utility (rather than rigidly maintaining it in terms of Stage 4 law and order). Outside the legal realm, free agreement and contract is the binding element of obligation.

Stage 6: The Universal Ethical Principle Orientation: Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical (the golden rule, the categorical imperative) and are not concrete moral rules like the Ten Commandments. At heart, these are universal principles of justice, of reciprocity and equality of human rights and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.

These stages of moral development have an implication for the teaching of religion. It is important for all teachers to note that Stage 4 is the level of normal younger adolescents, and Stages 5 and 6 for older adolescents and adults.[33] This must influence the approach of any discerning teacher to children. As Peters points out the teacher must have a good grasp not only of stages of moral development but also an insight into the position of individual children in relation to such stages.[34] Teachers also need tobe aware that the moral content in the Scripture texts does not make any allowance, or take any recognizance of the developmental stages. Moral teaching as contained in the Scriptures is not classified according to mental development; yet in moral development stages, stage development is invariant. One must progress through the stages in order; one cannot get to a higher stage without passing through the stage immediately preceding it.

For instance, an eleven year old child who has barely passed from the stage of looking at the good in terms of pleasure for himself cannot suddenly adopt an orientation where he looks at the good in terms of an abstract system of rights and obligations. A belief that a leap into

---

33 Kohlberg, L. Ibid pp.86 - 88

34 Ibid. pp. 288 - 9

moral maturity is possible is in sharp contrast to the facts of developmental research. [35]

It is precisely for this reason that the present study insists that religious education is primarily aimed at teaching religion and not at moral conduct. It should not aim primarily at 'moral education'. The moral teaching in religion assumes that all people are in the same stage of moral development. This shows that the moral teaching in the sacred text should be perceived from a religious perspective. It presupposes an intimate relationship between God and the individual, so that the kind of morality that results is based on, motivated by, this relationship.[36]

Another point to consider is that people cannot comprehend moral reasoning at a stage more than one stage beyond their own. A person at stage 2, who discriminates between good and bad on the basis of his own pleasure, cannot comprehend reasoning at stage 4, which appeals to fixed duties, the performance of which need not offer any promise of reward or pleasure. [37] Since stage 4 reasoning requires an orientation quite different from stage 2 reasoning, a series of cognitive readjustments must be made in order for stage 4 reasoning to be comprehended. The child who honestly asks his teacher why, according to the moral maxim it is better to give than to receive, does so because he does not, and cannot, understand such thinking. To his mind 'better' means 'better for him', and how can it be better for him to give than to receive?

For these reasons, this study dismisses the view that religious education should <u>primarily</u> aim at teaching

---

35 Duska, R. and Whelan, M. Kohlburg's Moral Judgement Stages in: <u>Psychology and Religion</u>. M.Gorman, Ed. New Jersey. Paulist Press. 1985. pp. 181-187.

36 Moran, G. Ibid. p.107.

37 Duska, R. and Whelan, M.. Ibid. p.184.

moral behaviour. Like the writers who are opposed to religious education as aiming at moral conduct,[38] this study sees morality as not dependent on religion generally. However, the study wants to make it clearer than it appears in the reviews above that the moral teaching in religious texts is dependent on the religion in the text. "The first prerequisite to the emergence of an adequate Christian morality is a scriptural-theological understanding of the nature of revelation."[39]

There is, certainly a close relationship between religion and morality. Love, which is much emphasized in the Christian religion involves behaving morally towards other people. Though closely related to religion, morality should not be identified with religion. Religion itself, and not moral conduct, is the principal concern of religious education.

To say that moral education is not a primary aim in religious education is not to underplay the moral teaching in religion, and the importance of moral education in the context of religious education. A real concern in this case is that it should not be given undue emphasis.

From what has been argued so far on the content of the literature reviewed in this chapter, the present study would rather support the writers in category B, then those in either A or C. That is, it agrees with the writers who maintain that religious education should not be aimed primarily at teaching moral behaviour; that morality is only a secondary aim of religious education.

---

38 See C. p. 92

39 Moran, G. Ibid. p.108.

CHAPTER 7

EDUCATION AS THE AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Discussions in Chapters 5 and 6 have isolated 'education' as the only acceptable aim of Religious Education in schools.

There has been, however, much argument on religious education and its place in the school curriculum in recent years. Some writers, mostly the secularists, contend that religion, because of its epistemic problem, does not satisfy educational criteria and, for this reason, should not be taught in schools.

This chapter seeks to examine the arguments of these writers and to weigh them against those of the writers who advocate the teaching of religion in schools. The discussion will take the following procedure: First, the description of the concept of education. This will be followed by the arguments from each of the contending sides. Then the study's argument will emerge, and its position be defended in the light of what is generally understood by 'education' and of education as defined by writers such as R. S. Peters, and P. H. Hirst.

A. The Concept of'Education'

Education, as generally understood, and according to the central usage of the term, embraces all experiences which make up 'life'. It has always been a social process by means of which societies have sought to transmit their culture to their young. There is, however, also a personal dimension, since the ideas and expectations of an individual's centre of consciousness are "the product of the initiation of the individual into public traditions

enshrined in the language, concepts, beliefs and rules of society". [1] Education is not restricted to any perticular type of activity, and, for this reason, educational theory has no definite line of demarcation between formal and informal agencies of education, yet both have to be considered. Whatever the agency or the experience, some kind of learning has to take place, if the product can be called 'education'.

Thus education implies that some information, some kind of subject matter, has been handed on. This has to be something worthwhile, and must be taught in a manner that is morally acceptable.[2] This implies that some ways of imparting information,or whatever is to be learned,are not good. Thus 'educating' demands that activities such as teaching and training satisfy certain criteria. Conditioning and 'brainwashing' for instance are ruled out, and do not count as techniques of education. There is a moral objection to them since they involve lack of respect for the human person, and also hinder intellectual development.

'Education' implies mental growth or development, hence the close relationship between education and knowledge. Knowledge is a formal requirement built into the concept of 'education' as an achievement. Knowledge can be defined as various ways of understanding experience which man has achieved, and which are gained through learning. Hence it is a great value. It is education's most important value. Since it is a deliberate, purposeful activity directed to the development of individuals, education necessarily involves considerations of value. [3]

Though centred around knowledge, education includes much more than the possession of more knowledge.

---

1 Peters, R. Ethics and Education. London. Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1966. p.49

2 Ibid.

3 Hirst, P. Knowledge and the Curriculum. R.K.P. 1974. p.32

It involves the acquisition of knowledge as well as the understanding of principles for the organisation of facts. An educated person knows the reason behind things he knows, or the underlying principles. He has an understanding of experience. As R. S. Peters explains it, education involves the possession of "some body of knowledge and some kind of conceptual scheme to raise this above the level of a collection of disjointed facts".[4]

Apart from acquisition of some knowledge, the concept of education embodies something much wider than this knowledge. It implies a wider cognitive perspective. This means that whatever a person has learned must have some connection with other things in life. It must not be seen as the only thing worth knowing, but as part of a whole and must be related to the whole. Thus an educated person does not have a too limited perspective. This comprehensive nature of education is also stressed by P. H. Hirst. He describes liberal education as "concerned with the comprehensive development of the mind".[5] Hence syllabuses and curricula have to be constructed in such a way that they introduce pupils as far as possible into the interrelated aspects of each of the basic forms of knowledge, and each of the several disciplines.

Education has a function in life, for it is meant for life. It means having knowledge that is not inert, or shelved. In education, the knowledge possessed characterizes a person's outlook on everything. Besides, the knowledge of an educated person involves a kind of commitment. For example, anyone who has studied science has to know that everything in science is backed by evidence, and also what counts as evidence. In the same way, all forms of thought and awareness have their own internal standards of appraisal, says Peters.[6] In other words,

---

4 Peters, R. Ibid. p.80
5 Hirst, P. Ibid. p.47
6 Peters, R. Ibid. p.31

the knowledge of an educated person must not be superficial.

Understanding is another key word implied in the concept of education. Whenever understanding is not given due concern in teaching then what results is often indoctrination, and not education. Peters makes a conceptual distinction between indoctrination and conditioning in the context of education. According to him, indoctrination cannot be ruled out as a process of education on the same sort of ground as conditioning can. Doctrines, from which the word 'indoctrination' derives, says Peters, "have to be understood and assented to in some embryonic way for indoctrination to take place".[7] For something to count as an educational process, a minimum of comprehension must be involved, says Peters. This, he continues, is quite compatible with formal instruction, as well as with commands, and in this respect, with indoctrination, for in all these examples children do understand, in an embryonic way, what is being passed on. They know what they are learning or doing and grasp the standards which they are expected to attain. In addition, they do, in a minimal sense act as voluntary agents, for they can rebel and refuse to do what is required of them.[8] Thus, according to Peters, there is a great difference, as far as the concept of education is concerned between conditioning and indoctrination.

Thus the concept of education, according to R. S. Peters, which also determines to some extent, educational criteria, can be summarized as follows:

1. It implies the transmission of what is worthwhile. Anything that does not, in any way, promote or develop people either mentally or physically or morally is not worthwhile, and is not education.
2. Education must involve knowledge and understanding.

---

7 Ibid. p.42

8 Ibid.

It must not be too limited, but have a wider cognitive perspective; it must not be inert.

3. Education rules out some procedures of transmission because they undermine the freedom of the learner.[9]

B. Opposing Views on Religious Education

Is religious instruction educational? There are different answers to this question:

1. The Secularist stance

(a) Knowledge and Truth:

Almost all criticisms from secularist writers concern the knowledge content of religion. 'Knowledge implies truth, and where truth is questionable there can be no sound knowledge'. This seems to be the focal point of their arguments.

This argument can be traced from an educational philosophy known as Naturalism, which is opposed to Idealism.

Naturalism has its foundation in the early Greek nature philosophies. It has been supported and shaped by the progress of Science after the Renaissance, and by a general acceptance of empirical reality. To the naturalist, nature consists of matter, and is all that exists.

Educationally, naturalism conceives of the processes of teaching and learning as basically concerned with evidence. What should be accepted as truth is only those matters that have been investigated publicly. Instruction, according to this theory, must move from observation and experimentation toward a general principle, and this is the pattern of inductive thinking.

For this reason, secularist writers like: Kazepides, T.[10]

---

9 Ibid. p.45

10 'Is Religious Education Possible?' A rejoinder to W.D. Hudson, in: Journal of Philosophy of Education. Vol. 17 No. 2. 1983. pp. 259 - 264

(1983); Gardner, P. (1980)[11]; Marples, R. (1978)[12] to name but a few, have the same basic argument, namely, that religion is not knowledge because religious propositions or statements such as that God exists, that all people will be judged on the Last Day, the Resurrection of Jesus and various miracles are not based on objective truth and therefore cannot be verified scientifically.

Kazepides, T. (1983) asks: "If religious beliefs are neither reasonable nor part of the 'river-bed' of our thinking, how can they find a place in education?" He also notes that all the examples that Wittgenstein gives of the propositions that belong to the foundations of our thinking (with the exception of the propositions of logic) are about 'material objects'. Religious propositions, on the other hand, are not empirical.

Gardner, P. (1980) argues against P. H. Hirst, who has included religion among the 'forms of knowledge', and for saying that it has 'distinctive expressions that are testable against experience...'

He singles out the problem of evil. He argues that evil is incompatible with the idea of a loving, all powerful God of the Christian religion. This, points out Gardner, shows that religious beliefs cannot be tested against experience, whereas Knowledge should be testable against experience.

Marples, R. (1978) uses what he describes as a correspondence theory to support his argument on knowledge and truth in religion. This theory relates truth to 'fact' and 'objectivity'. According to this theory, a proposition is true if, and only if, it corresponds to fact.

---

11 'Religious Education: in defence of non-commitment' in: Journal of Philosophy of Education. Vol. 14 No. 2 1980. pp. 157 - 166

12 'Is Religious Education Possible?' in: Journal of Philosophy of Education. Vol. 12 1978.pp.81 - 91

Thus according to the extreme secularist view there is no knowledge in religion, and, consequently, it is not a discipline of education; it is not a means of educating.

Though not actually endorsing cultural relativism in its totality, many secularist writers use aspects of it in their arguments against religion:

R. Marples points out that certain statements may be taken for granted, depending on their acceptance in certain areas. Thus 'God is omnipotent' is not open to doubt in the same way that a matter of fact claim like 'our cat hates the dog next door' is. There is no room for doubt if people know who God is, reminds Marples. Yet this would not be the case with people who do not share a religious form of life. They would find it otherwise, "for they have not been initiated into its language and associated conception of reality". Continuing on this theme, Marples states that in addition to everyday language, it appears that there are sub-sections of society speaking a'language' of their own. Hence some aspect of cultural relativism is being applied here. This of course, goes to prove that religious statements and propositions are not equally objective to those inside and those outside the faith community. Not only Marples, but other secularist writers have arguments based on Wittgenstein's writings.

Kazepides, T. (1980)[13] has also made use of the 'language game' theory as explained by Wittgenstein. Basing his argument on this theory, which says that the meaning of a word 'is its use in the language' in question, Kazepides has stated that religious statements can be understood only inside a particular cultural setting, that is, only within a religious community.

---

13 Ibid.

(b) The historical and the moral content of religion:

Some secularists either overlook or refuse to acknowledge religion's historical and moral content as having any educational value.

Gardner, P. (1980)[14], quoting Wittgenstein, argues that these statements are not the basis of the Christian belief that is in question, and for this reason do not add anything to the knowledge content of Christianity.

T. Kazepides.[15] has also argued against moral teaching. He states that religion does not satisfy educational requirements because it does not, and cannot, justify its moral teaching. No reason is given for telling people not to do this or that, says Kazepides.

It can be said, in short, that in general, the arguments of the secularists rest on the fact that religious belief, since it is not supported by adequate evidence, is uncertain. Since the'knowledge' content of religion is questionable, religion does not satisfy the knowledge criterion of education and is therefore uneducational.

2. The View of the proponents of Religious Education

Writers who support the teaching of religion in schools seem to have, on the whole, a slightly different view of 'knowledge' and of 'education' from that of the secularist writers. They give both concepts a wider meaning. For them knowledge is not only verifiable truth, but also all the information, the whole subject content. Thus the following arguments:

(a) Religion teaching can be educational despite the uncertainty surrounding religion's truth claims:

Durka, G. (1979)[16]: It is quite clear, from reading

---

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 'Towards a critical theory of teaching' in: Religious Education. Vol. 74 No. 1, 1979 pp.39-48.

Gloria Durka's article, that she is much aware of, and wishes to draw the attention of those who teach religion to the uncertainty encountered in religion material. Hence the title and the thrust of the article "Towards a critical theory of teaching".

Yet she refers to the whole subject matter of religion as 'Knowledge', which has to be studied in depth. She encourages a knowledge oriented and purposeful way of teaching. The knowledge content of religion has to be approached with critical thinking. The whole study, insists, Durka, ought to be geared to helping students to discriminate between qualities of experience found in the scripture text, as well as in actual life.

It is this critical examination of experience in Scripture and comparing that experience with personal experience that will help the student toward education in religious matters, argues Durka. Knowledge is based on experience, so religion teaching, insists Durka, should make the student aware of, and be able to discriminate between objective and subjective experience, and other types of experience. This will throw some light on what is meant by a 'religious experience'. All this involves 'knowledge' and has to be situated in some 'knowledge context', as implied in Durka's presentation.

Hoffmann, N. (1980)[17]: In her article, Nadia Hoffmann states explicitly that religion "does have a legitimate place in any school curriculum in spite of the fact that religion now represents one possible truth among many others, and its meaning has become relativised". Hoffmann expresses her dissatisfaction with the idea that what is included in 'knowledge' is only that which is objectively true and empirically verifiable when she points out that modern society seems to have banished from reality all that is not empirically observable. She adds that this

---

17 'Teaching of Religion in Secular Schools' in: Religious Education, Vol. 75 No. 6 1980. pp.667-681

severely limits the scope of contemporary human experiencing.

Like Gloria Durka, mentioned above, Hoffmann contends that religion is part of education: awareness of the religious viewpoint will enlarge the student's awareness of potential human experiences. He will learn that the concerns and interests of modern society do not comprise the entirety of human interest and experiences, she insists.

Hoffmann makes a distinction between information about religion and initiation into religion. The former is educational, but not the latter.

Hoffmann also mentions that all religions comprehend the tensions that belief is accompanied with. Thus the prototype of the despairing, questioning believer is known within all religious faiths. She reminds the reader that in the Jewish religion God puts Job on trial; and in the Christian religion Jesus cries out while he questions, almost uncertainly, on the cross; and that the Hindus recognise the principle of Avidya, or ignorance. All this is evident proof that uncertainty is not something newly discovered about religion, but has always been a feature of religion, which, however, does not, as such, disqualify religion as part of education.

Wilson, J. (1964)[18]: demonstrates, in clear terms, that knowledge is not of the same quality in all disciplines with regard to truth. He points out that religious, political and moral beliefs are "uncertain in a sense in which Mathematics and Latin Grammar are not uncertain".

When Wilson says that people's minds must not be closed on uncertain issues, referring to religion teaching, he is definitely not against the teaching of religion, but against certain ways of approaching religious instruction. This becomes even more evident when, referring to all disciplines, he reminds that

---

18 'Education and Indoctrination' in Aims of Education. Hollins, J. (Ed). Manchester University Press. 1964

severely limits the scope of contemporary human experiencing.

Like Gloria Durka, mentioned above, Hoffmann contends that religion is part of education: awareness of the religious viewpoint will enlarge the student's awareness of potential human experiences. He will learn that the concerns and interests of modern society do not comprise the entirety of human interest and experiences, she insists.

Hoffmann makes a distinction between information about religion and initiation into religion. The former is educational, but not the latter.

Hoffmann also mentions that all religions comprehend the tensions that belief is accompanied with. Thus the prototype of the despairing, questioning believer is known within all religious faiths. She reminds the reader that in the Jewish religion God puts Job on trial; and in the Christian religion Jesus cries out while he questions, almost uncertainly, on the cross; and that the Hindus recognise the principle of Avidya, or ignorance. All this is evident proof that uncertainty is not something newly discovered about religion, but has always been a feature of religion, which, however, does not, as such, disqualify religion as part of education.

Wilson, J. (1964)[18]: demonstrates, in clear terms, that knowledge is not of the same quality in all disciplines with regard to truth. He points out that religious, political and moral beliefs are "uncertain in a sense in which Mathematics and Latin Grammar are not uncertain".

When Wilson says that people's minds must not be closed on uncertain issues, referring to religion teaching, he is definitely not against the teaching of religion, but against certain ways of approaching religious instruction. This becomes even more evident when, referring to all disciplines, he reminds that

---

18 'Education and Indoctrination' in Aims of Education. Hollins, J. (Ed). Manchester University Press. 1964

"since there are few hundred per cent certainties it would be dangerous to use any method of teaching which does not allow the student the chance to reject the beliefs either at the time or in the future". Thus for Wilson, also, 'knowledge' is not synonymous with 'hundred per cent certainty'. This gives 'education' a broader and not too restricted perspective. He states it clearly that uncertainties are found in many school disciplines in varying degrees. Hence the importance of an open approach to all school subjects.

(b) Religion, as part of inherited culture, forms part of education

Hoffmann, N. (1980)[19]: It is pointed out in Hoffmann's argument, that religion features highly in the culture of some nations. She even states that until the modern age, religion has always been an integral and vital part of every human civilization. It has inspired humanity in many of its spiritual and cultural endeavours in the fields of literature, art, music, law and so on. She adds that it is hardly possible to understand human history and modern man without also understanding something of his religious origins.

If religion is part of human culture, it is also part of human education, since education is concerned, first and foremost, with human life, and life in society.

Hoffmann's argument on culture as involved and implied in education is set in the context of the Jewish religion, which also constitutes the basis of Jewish culture, and, accordingly, the foundation of Jewish education.

Moran, G. (1966)[20]: In his discussion on the school curriculum with regard to the teaching of religion, Gabriel Moran puts much emphasis on religion as being approached

---

19 Ibid

20 Moran, G. (1966) pp. 149 - 151

from the daily life of the student to the text, and not the other way round. This is in accordance with religion, which also begins from human experience to the numinous. In other words, religion is steeped in, and has its origin in human culture. Thus, according to Moran, religious instruction should begin "in the student's experience of the present community", that is, from the student's culture, thus in keeping with religion's educational significance.

Blake, N. (1988)[21]: In this article, which is a reply to David Aspin, Nigel Blake refers to the strong impact which religion, as part of a person's culture, can have on the minds of children. He points out that young Muslims in church schools can learn a lot about Christianity but seem unlikely to learn to be Christians. It is equally true of a Christian child if he or she was to learn to be a Muslim. This is because religion forms part of a person's culture and upbringing. In this context, Blake brings in the question of cultural relativism, which, apart from the arguments it provokes, indicates clearly that it is generally accepted that religion has much to do with culture, and hence finds its way into education.

(c) The moral content in religion contributes toward moral education:

The following writers give the moral aspect of religion as an argument for including it in the school curriculum as part of education:

Hoffmann, N. (1979)[22]: The writer says that one of the questions that confront man when in search for a good, just and meaningful life is the existence of good and

---

21 'Church Schools, Religious Education and the Multi-ethnic Community': A reply to David Aspin in; Journal of Philosophy of Education, Vol. 17 No. 2 pp.241 - 250.

22 Hoffmann, N. Ibid.

evil, and the definition of a 'good' person. These form part of religion, says Hoffmann.

Though the study of religion must not be seen solely, or primarily, as a means to teaching values, a value system, says Hoffmann, is built-in in almost all religions. The study of religion will enable students to decide for themselves whether there is some value that is worth incorporating into their own lives. Thus religion is not educationally irrelevant as some people think, says Hoffmann.

Oraison, M. (1961) [23]: The whole book is an emphasis on the view that if it aims at character development, a religion-based moral instruction will not generate guilt feelings. He insists that if such teaching rests on the fact that the reason for saying anything about morality is to say how people might better live, then it will not equate morality with obligation. It will liberate, and educate. The whole thrust in the book is moral teaching in religion approached psychologically and educationally.

Moran, G. (1968)[24]: insists that teaching morality as part of religious instruction is educational, depending on certain conditions:

Firstly, when teaching good moral behaviour, teachers must keep in mind that improvement in this task demands an improved educational context. That is, the student must come to moral instruction with some knowledge of history, economics and biology. The better the general knowledge is, the greater the possibility that moral behaviour will be well taught, and well understood. The student has to relate the moral teaching, and instruction, to the world he lives in.

Secondly, Culture also functions in moral instruction. Here Moran quotes John Dewey's statement: "If one could

---

23 Love or Constraint. S.C.M. Pres Ltd. London.1959

24 Vision and Tactics. Burns & Oates Ltd.London 1968 Chapter 9.

control the songs of a nation, one need not care who made the laws". This shows the importance of knowing the society from which the students come. An effective moral education depends much on such knowledge. Any teaching on morality must admit to, and take into account the complexity of social order as well as the rapidity of social change, stresses Moran. It is useless to educate students to live in a society that no longer exists. If it is relevant, moral instruction becomes more educational, argues Moran.

C. This study's argument

The secularist writers under B1 have based their arguments on 'experience' and 'knowledge' as understood objectively. What is fundamental in religion, the existence of God, is not knowledge since it is not based on objective truth. Some proponents of religious education may contradict this, yet Christianity and some important world religions assume and regard such reasoning as quite natural. For instance, the theme of the remnant, in the Judeo-Christian religion, which can be explained as meaning that only a minority attain religious faith and its demands, make it clear that in general, much about religion is not objective, obvious reality that can be accepted by all. In addition, Jesus has emphasized that 'God is spirit'.

For this reason, if 'education' was concerned only with empirical realities, then religion's epistemological problem would make religious education impossible, for, as has been observed, it cannot be proved beyond doubt that God exists; neither can it be proved, beyond doubt that he does not exist.

This study contends, however, that this epistemological problem, as such, does not make religion uneducational. In other words, the study disagrees with those who have argued that religious study cannot bring about education because of the said knowledge problem. Here are the

1. 'Education embraces a much wider scope than empirical objective knowledge:

Education has as one of its tasks, the use of available knowledge which, very often, is not one hundred per cent truth, in its search for truth. J. Wilson[25] has stated that there are few disciplines, if any, where the subject matter content contains a hundred per cent truth, and that there are different degrees of certainty in different disciplines. He even advises that, for this reason, in teaching, different disciplines should be approached according to the degree of truth in their content, that those with a truth claim that is uncertain should be approached accordingly. R. S. Peters and P. H. Hirst probably share the same view as Wilson on this matter for they both include religion either among the known disciplines or forms of knowledge, though much aware of the fact that the knowledge content of religion is not empirical knowledge, and can be described as uncertain.[26]

The student, by studying the knowledge content of religion, can, after comparing it with his own experience and making his own assessment of it, come to his own conclusion with regard to religion, and either accept or reject it. This would show that the student has undergone some education in religion.

All disciplines are in the process of development. Contemporary Theology also realizes the fact that religion has not reached the final answers to many questions, and that it is still searching for truth. R. S. Peters defines a body of knowledge as "an accumulated heritage that has stood up to public scrutiny and discussion, and which has structured the outlook of countless men and women in its built-in conceptual scheme."[27] This means

---

25 Wilson, J. Ibid.

26 Peters, R. Ibid. p.164
Hirst, P. Ibid. p. 44

27 Ibid. p.54

that education, on which the statement is based, is in process of development, and does not deal with hundred per cent certainties. The Bibl also has undergone much scrutiny, especially in the last century and in more recent times.

Bible study has, and is still, using research and archeology for its development. Findings like the Qumran texts have shed more light on some biblical terms and statements. All this is done to develop the minds of people on religious matters, and is educational. It is in accordance with Peters' statement that it is by critical procedures that knowledge content is assessed, revised and adapted to new discoveries.[28] Like J. Wilson Peters also differentiates between different disciplines: "What matters in science and philosophy is truth; in morals it is not only truth, but justice as well; in religion it is reverence for the contingency of the natural order".[29]

2. Religion is worth studying

a) It has intrinsic value.

Religion is a kind of experience. It may not be an objective, empirical experience, but it is a human experience, nevertheless.

P. H. Hirst defines liberal education as aimed at achieving an understanding of experience in many different ways.[30] He sees education as comprehensive when he states that liberal education is aimed at 'the acquisition by critical training and discipline not only of facts but also of complex conceptual schemes and of the arts and techniques of different types of reasoning and judgement".[31] He defines forms of knowledge as "the com-

---

28 Peters, R. Ibid

29 Ibid.

30 Hirst, P. H. Ibid. p.47

31 Ibid.

plex ways of understanding experience which man has achieved, which are publicly specifiable and which are gained through learning."[32]

Here is an example from religion. In the Old Testament, Job, in the midst of intense sufferi. and on the brink of despair, is comforted by the thought of God. Jesus, according to St. Luke's gospel, died with the words: "Father! In your hands I place my spirit". We sometimes read about, or hear it told, that someone's courage, when everything else seemed to have failed, had been sustained, boosted up by a thought of supernatural realities, of powers beyond the material universe. This sense of the numinous can be so strong that hope builds up, and despair, and even possible suicide is evaded. This is a religious experience, and is something real.

Thus religious study involves being introduced to an activity that is not purely instrumental since it concerns a way of life, an outlook that is adopted for its intrinsic value. R. S. Peters says that any person who asks, with regard to religion, "why do this rather than that; and does so seriously, must answer it in the consciousness that there are regularities in nature, one of them being his own mortality as a man".[33] Quoting Whitehead, he says, "religion is what the individual does with his solitariness...In its solitariness the spirit asks, What, in the way of value, is the attainment of life... Religion is world loyalty".[34] Thus religion is concerned with ultimate questions. With human beings, the thought of death is accompanied with either an end to everything, a complete annihilation, or some religious idea. It is concerned with questions transcending material realities, questions that are still, at present, difficult either to

---

32 Hirst, P. Ibid. p.38
33 Peters, R. Ibid. p.164
34 Ibid.

plex ways of understanding experience which man has achieved, which are publicly specifiable and which are gained through learning."[32]

Here is an example from religion. In the Old Testament, Job, in the midst of intense suffering and on the brink of despair, is comforted by the thought of God. Jesus, according to St. Luke's gospel, died with the words: "Father! In your hands I place my spirit". We sometimes read about, or hear it told, that someone's courage, when everything else seemed to have failed, had been sustained, boosted up by a thought of supernatural realities, of powers beyond the material universe. This sense of the numinous can be so strong that hope builds up, and despair, and even possible suicide is evaded. This is a religious experience, and is something real.

Thus religious study involves being introduced to an activity that is not purely instrumental since it concerns a way of life, an outlook that is adopted for its intrinsic value. R. S. Peters says that any person who asks, with regard to religion, "why do this rather than that; and does so seriously, must answer it in the consciousness that there are regularities in nature, one of them being his own mortality as a man".[33] Quoting Whitehead, he says, "religion is what the individual does with his solitariness...In its solitariness the spirit asks, What, in the way of value, is the attainment of life... Religion is world loyalty".[34] Thus religion is concerned with ultimate questions. With human beings, the thought of death is accompanied with either an end to everything, a complete annihilation, or some religious idea. It is concerned with questions transcending material realities, questions that are still, at present, difficult either to

---

32 Hirst, P. Ibid. p.88

33 Peters, R. Ibid. p.164

34 Ibid.

affirm or deny with absolute certainty. P. Hirst is of the same opinion with regard to religion as having intrinsic value, and for this reason, its place in education. Such values, says Hirst, "can be, and often are, values that reflect the interests of a minority group in the society. They may be religious, political or utilitarian in character."[35]

Thus religion is a kind of experience that cannot be overlooked. Hence the reason why Nadia Hoffmann warns against limiting human experiences to the level of only what can be empirically observed.[36]

b) It has instrumental value.

The study of religion has instrumental value. It is an activity characterized by other forms of knowledge apart from the belief it is centred upon. In this study the student also gets involved in history, cultural anthropology, ethics and morality.

Thus history, literary genre and poetry found in the Bible help to illuminate other areas of life and contribute to mental development, while the moral content contributes to the quality of living.[37] That the Bible contains educational matter is touched on once again by Peters when he emphasizes the importance of integration of practical and academic activities in schools which offer practical courses only. He states: "The Bible and Homer, for instance, provide long standing examples of poetry and stories that are well within the reach of most of the population. The pity is that nowadays, horror comics and strip cartoons, which lack the qualities of simple works of art seem to be more widely read".[38]

It is also this study's contention that the moral teaching in religion can be very educational, depending on

---

35 Hirst, P. Ibid. p. 82
36 Hoffmann, N. Ibid.
37 Peters, R. Ibid p. 159
38 Ibid. p. 177

how it is handled. The educational character of religion's moral teaching is in keeping with the idea of religion as promoting the good life. In his essay on liberal education, P. H. Hirst has stated that "the determination of the good life is now considered to be itself the pursuit of a particular form of rational knowledge..."[39]

D. Summary and Conclusion

'The existence of God', the crucial factor, and centre of belief of the most important religions, creates the epistemological problem and also the major target of all criticisms against religious education. Educationally, it renders the subject content of religious education 'uncertain' since it can neither be affirmed, nor denied with empirical certainty.

The problem does affect the knowledge content of religion, but does not make Religious Instruction uneducational, for education embraces all life experiences, including religious experiences, and all that goes into the history and culture of any community.

The study also considers the values of religion, intrinsic and instrumental, since value is a criterion of education.

Consequently, it rejects the idea that religion is not educational, that 'religious education is impossible'.

Since it recognizes the knowledge problem of religion, the study sees the right approach to Religious Education as at least, a partial solution to the problem. Religious instruction in schools should, in general, be more of an elucidation than advocacy.

---

39 Hirst, P. Ibid.

PART III

A DEFENCE OF A PARTICULAR SET OF AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN LESOTHO

CHAPTER 8

THE SELECTION OF AIMS FOR LESOTHO

The conclusion arrived at in the last chapter was that people can be educated on religious matters; that religious instruction can, and should, aim at educating.

'To educate in religious matters' is however a very general aim. It can also be described as an ultimate aim, and an ultimate aim can be attained, at least partly, through the help of mediate, more specific instructional aims.[1]

Effective teaching is that which promotes learning. For this reason, mediate instructional aims, which the present chapter seeks to specify, are not static tenets, but are dynamically interactive with cognitive and social needs, with learning theory underlying procedures, and with personal and intellectual characteristics of learning groups.[2]

With this in view, this chapter will examine; first, the nature of the discipline, i.e. of Religious Education; and secondly, the situation obtaining in Lesotho with special reference to Religious Education; and lastly, that which should be emphasized when teaching religion in the light of the first two points, that is, the implications.

A. The Nature of the Discipline

i) Religious Aspect

The Judeo-Christian religion on which this study is based, could be called Lesotho's religion as can be seen from Part I. This is partly the reason why it has

---

1 Stenhouse, L. An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development. London. Heinemann. 1975.
Wheeler, D. Curriculum Process. University of London Press. 1967.
Tyler, R. Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. University of Chicago Press. 1950.

2 Durka, G. Towards a critical Theory of Teaching. in: Religious Education. Vol. 74 No. I.pp.39-48. 1979.

Author Ramahadi E D
Name of thesis The Aims of religious education in Lesotho 1987

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg Library website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the Library website.