

Challenges to the Study and Teaching of Religion in Higher Education

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Abstract

a. Background

The study and teaching of religion has existed from the beginning of recorded history. In Zambia, religion is taught in secondary school up to higher education. According to Dennis Kinlaw, religion is in two categories Poly/Pantheistic and Monotheistic. He explains that poly/pantheistic religions express themselves in pantheism and polytheism. (Kinlaw 2005:16). Polytheism sees nature as containing the divine and most Ancient Near Eastern religions are examples including the present New Age movement (2005:17).

In secondary school and tertiary level in Zambia, both monotheistic and poly/pantheistic religions are taught. Like other fields of study at tertiary levels are pursued with vigor and interest, there is room for the study of religion to be pursued with robustness.

b. Objectives

This article will investigate the origins of the challenges of the study and teaching of religion in higher learning institutions in Zambia putting into consideration political, economic and social dynamics at play. It will also seek to probe why the study and teaching of religion faces challenges unlike other fields of knowledge.

c. Methods:

This chapter reviews key pedagogical issues in religious studies in higher education in Zambia as can be evaluated from academic religious literature over the last 50 years. It traces the development of religious studies from the onset of missionary presence in Zambia unto the present day 21st century.

d. Outcomes:

This article will demonstrate how the study of religions could be appreciated by showing how it benefits society. The disconnect between the study of religion and the output to society will be resolved.

Introduction

Teaching is defined as a conscious and deliberate effort by a mature and experienced person to impart information, knowledge, and skills to an immature person or a less experienced person (Chizelu, 2006, p. 15). According to (Reed and Prevost, 1993, p.45) he defined teaching from the ancient biblical Hebrew education perspective by stating that, teaching is passing on information and that information is the relationship outlined by God as to how the Hebrews were to know him and relates with Him. This information was to be passed on from generation to generation. Formal teaching of religion in Zambia's higher education began at the inauguration of university education in 1964.

In pre independence times, missionary religious curriculum dominated primary and secondary schools which were managed by the church. Simuchimba (2006, p. 5) states that missionary period between 1883-1924 offered religious instructions which was confessional in nature. The goal of their teaching religious education was to produce a Christian. The missionaries did not mind erasing traditional beliefs which the indigenous people had embraced for centuries.

Prior to the structured form of learning in Africa and Zambia in particular, religion was a way of life. Justifying this statement, Mbiti (1969, p.1) states that African people are very religious with each people groups having its own system of beliefs and practices. God is called by various names such as Leza, Mwami, Lesa, Mulungu, Mulimu, Nzambi and other different names depending on the tribe or ethnic group. According to (Chizelu, 2006, p. 34), he infers that names were related to God's creation and activities among his people. In Africa and Zambia in particular, forms of religious practices were passed on from generation to generation as younger generation learnt to embrace sacred practices from the elderly of their community.

Religion which is the subject of this chapter has been in existence since Old Testament times or is as old as recorded history. It suffices to contend that religion has been as old as the existence of humanity in most societies of the world.

Therefore from the onset, religion has been part of humanity's life and practice as can be noted from the rituals performed. Mbiti (1969, 2-3) religion is discerned in ceremonies, beliefs, rituals etc. Aspects such as birth, death and burial, wedding ceremonies, crop planting, harvest, hunting, were very present and practiced ritualistically. In the African setup, religion was not separate from the holistic life of a community. It is found in

all areas of human life i.e. culture, politics, economics and social life. Gathogo states that in Africa, religion is integrated in the culture and worldviews of the African people (Gathogo, p. 12). So, religious practices defined how people lived in relation to their departed relatives, ancestors, it defined how they treated sacred places like shrines and related worship places. Nonetheless, the definition of religion has not been an easy thing to define.

In order to understand the challenges to the study and teaching of religion in higher learning institutions in Zambia, it's vital for the reader to be enlightened with some definition about religion and contentions to the definitions that have dogged religions scholars. Conversations about the proper definition of religion has not received consensus. The author believes that the lack of consensus to the definitions is that there are so many religions which differ in the way they explain, human existence, creation, the cosmos, God, sin, eternity to mention but a few areas.

In respect of what has been explained, religion can be defined as the practice of worship of another being, or image. Smart (1979:4) religion is the experience of the Holy. By 'experience of the hole' Smart infer that religion has an objective character. Here religion can be experienced and this experience is an objective reality (Smart, 1979, p .5). Brown (1975) "religion includes community beliefs about God, beliefs of the community about God, God's relationship to the world, the places and people which the community believes to be holy". Regardless of the scholar's contentions about the true definition of religion, some have argued that religion is not easy to define (Mbiti 1969, p 15), and (Chizelu, 2006, p. 16) also adds to the debate by stating that "the concept of religion has many definitions. However, Tullock in Chizelu, (2006, p 16) states that religion "is a belief in a supernatural controlling power, in a personal God or gods entitled to obedience and worship". For Mbiti (1969), to an African, religion is an ontological reality because it permeates the questions of 'existence' and of 'Being'.

This chapter is concerned the following issues:

- (i) How religion has played itself out in the day to day life of individuals as can be traced from history in Africa and Zambia in particular.
- (ii) The teaching of religion and its impact to the education system in Zambia tracing its origin from church run schools.
- (iii) What should the teaching of religion in higher learning institutions be concerned with producing?

To answer these pertinent questions, it's helpful to consider theological arguments as advanced by evangelical scholar Dennis Kinlaw. In his book entitled "Let's Start with Jesus: Proper Way of Doing Theology" opens the discussion by giving a good premise of understanding religions. He points out two kinds of religions in which all world religions can be grouped.

Two Kinds of Religions and their Characteristics

Religions have a great influence in the way people do things, see things, interpret things; in other words, it affects their world views. There is a connection between a particular religious confession and practice. Many societies of the world have expressed this in their own way. Therefore, an appreciation of the two kinds of religions shapes the mind in such a way that teaching or studying religions have some direction. Categorizing world religions into two main ones gives structure to the study or teaching and some kind of parameters. Kinlaw provides students and teachers of religion the structure and parameters to be able to know what areas to study i.e. where to begin and where to end, what to concentrate on and what to consider insignificant.

Two categories of religions Kinlaw states are those which are naturalistic in nature and express themselves in pantheism and polytheism (Kinlaw, 2005, p.16). In pantheism, the divine is expressed in what has been created. Davies (1992, p. 45) explains two types of pantheism. The first one is absolute pantheism which states that everything these is is God and modified pantheism states that "God is the reality or principle behind nature". That is to say all reality is so much identical with the divine. Meaning that God is all and all is God. To exemplify what is meant here is that, created matter like trees, rivers, plants, animals and human beings are part of the 'One' or 'whole' to use Kinlaw's terms. Example of religions that practices this understanding is Hinduism and New age Movement (Kinlaw, 2005, p.16).

Polytheism, on the other hand, is belief in more than one God. This kind of religion states that 'nature contains the divine'. That is to say, that which is considered divine manifests itself in various kinds of forces. For example the Ocean (Gk Oceanos), Ouranos (Gk the heavens) were worshiped as divine being (Kinlaw). The Romans in ancient times also worshipped the moon (Luna) and the sun (Sol) and ascribed worship to these bodies as gods. On the problem of sin, polytheism and pantheism belief that evil is part of the divine. These two religious positions contend that there is no transcendent being that humanity can appeal to when in problems or faced with evil. Thus we note in Buddhism that there is no ultimate ontological reality in the 'Other' divine being

apart from the fact that its teaching through nirvana stresses the fact that a person can reach that high form or high state (Smart 1979, p. 6).

Going by definition, Polytheism, the author proposes, is very prominent in African religions. These religions are not universal as there are many gods found in Africa with each society or nation having beliefs in other gods (Mbiti, 1969, p.4).

For instance religion in Africa affects the way people view reality. Mbiti argues that in the African religion, each people group has their own beliefs and practices (1969:1). For Mbiti, it's futile to think that Africa has one religion which all people groups adhere to. Africa has so many traditional religions which permeates all aspects of life (1969). These religions practices exert so much influence in the way people think and in the way they live. Even the spiritual realm of the dead is as real as the living because ancestral worship is one characteristic of religious practices. In fact he says that there is no line drawn between the spiritual and the physical world. The dead have a role to play in the affairs of the living. The dead whom he calls, *the living dead* can influence the actions of the living either for good or bad.

Another group of religions known as monotheistic religions comprise of the following: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. These three are found and practiced in most parts of the world and with millions of adherents. Kaufmann, in Kinlaw's book (*Let's Start with Jesus: A New Way of Doing Theology*) says that these three religions are rooted in history. They trace their roots from Abraham. The tenets of monotheism are that nature and the divine are two distinct. God is not found in nature or creation. Anyone who tries to worship God through nature of any created thing is guilty of idolatry (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 17). To sum it up, there is an ontological difference between God and nature. Furthermore, monotheistic religions contend that both polytheism and pantheism have no answer to the problem of sin whereas in monotheism the answer to the problem of sin lies in God.

However going deeper in studying monotheistic religions, one finds that even though it's rooted in history, there are fundamental differences that must be taken into account. One such difference is the emphasis on worship of God. Christians emphasize the worship of God through his son Jesus Christ. Christian religion is founded on the worship of God through Jesus Christ who was God's sent Son to save the world from sin. For Muslims, Muhammad is believed to be the sent prophet of God to mankind and in Judaism, Jesus is not the promised messiah.

Although Christianity is directly descended from Jewish religion (Marshall, 1992, p.349), Jesus Christ is the central figure in the Christian faith; he is called the messiah. The scriptures records that he is God's promise to mankind for the salvation of the world. Central to the Christian faith are the following teachings (i) Christians believe in the existence of one God who created the heavens and the earth (ii) Christians believe that man was made in the image of God and due to Adamic sin, the image is distorted (iii) Christians believe also that revealed himself to the Jews and chose them as his own people (iv) Christians believe that God is the righteousness judge and lastly that he will one day come and establish his final Kingdom where the righteous shall live with him in eternity (Marshall). The mission of Jesus the messiah (France, 1992, p. 338) was preaching, teaching and healing. Jesus taught repentance for the kingdom of God was near. He called upon his hearers to repent and believe the good news. The authority of the Bible is central to the life of a Christian. The Bible contains God's word to the Church (Brown, 2010, p. 174). Other core teachings of the bible are as follows:

1. Water baptism is used as a symbol of repentance
2. The sacraments (Holy Communion). The Lord's supper is a Christian practice of meal sharing i.e. the breaking of bread and drinking of wine as a command Christ instructed to be done in remembrance of him (Mark 14:22).

Claims that Christianity has the absolute 'Truth' apart from any other religion are already a bias that adherents and students of the bible are accused of. So, this is a challenge that is encountered when teaching religion takes this route. To claim to be the only True religion in a multi religious society is to infer like (Smart, 1979, p. 5) would say that other religions are then considered to be a "mass of fallacies and superstitions". On the other hand absolute Christian claims cannot be abandoned for fear of being labeled bigotries.

Islam means submission or surrender in Arabic. Islam, like it is in Christianity, believes that the Quran is the revelation of God to mankind. Muslims believe that the words of God contained in the Quran are divine and were uncreated message. This message in the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad who according to Islam (Jawad, 2010, p. 148) is the perfect model for humanity as contained in the Quran (33:21). Islam talks of Muhammad as the sent prophet from God. To be a Muslim is to confess that you submit and surrender to the will of Allah (Jawad, 2010, p. 144). Like Christianity, Islam's affirmation of the oneness of God is so clear. Islam states that Allah is God and there is no other besides him. It is sin known as '*shirk*' to associate (Brown, 1975, p. 207) Allah with a partner. Allah is so unique that nothing that is created not even human resembles

him. This affirmation of Islam is already in conflict with the adherents of Christianity. One of the cores of Christian theological affirmations is that man is created in the image of God and Jesus Christ shares his divine nature with God the Father. With this theological belief, already a conflict is created between Islamic beliefs, Judaistic beliefs with that of Christian beliefs.

Islam also makes another non-negotiable claim (Kinlaw) that Allah has no son. In Islam, God has no Son. He did not beget and was not begotten (Brown, 1975, p. 211). The scholars of Islamic teaching does through the Quran in emphasizing the teaching without shying away from teaching hell fire for anyone who claims that there are other gods besides Allah 2.163,165,167 (Kinlaw). Islamic religious teachers ensures in their teaching that whatever is stated in the Quran and is important for mankind to hear is taught. For examples all adherents to the Islamic faith must abide by shari`a. Shari`a means (Brown, 1975, p. 211) a path of conduct of a person's lifewhich all Muslims must obey. For Islam, religion is the source of all ethics and values in that it sets standards for behavior (Jawad, 2010, p. 146). There are five main pillars of Islam.

1. Shahada- This is a confession that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet
2. Salat. This is the second pillar of Islam. Salat is a liturgical form of prayer (Kerr, 1992, p.318). Prayer is duty to be performed by all Muslims at prescribed hours
3. Zakat- Arms giving. The Zakat is the duty of sharing one's wealth with poor people (Kerr). This is an obligation to those who are rich
4. Fasting- this is a discipline of the soul which makes devote Muslims wait patiently upon Allah to guide and provide. It's an obligatory act which every Muslim must do during the month of Ramadan (Jawad). During fasting some things are avoided such as eating al food, abstain from food, sex, smoking, from dawn to dusk.
5. The last fundamental duty in Islam is going to Mecca. This must be done at least once in someone lifetime.

In view of what is explained regarding Islam, conversional teaching cannot suffice. Between Christianity and Islam, we are a conflict. Their theological emphases differ on the subject of confession, repentance, heaven, hell etc. We are again left with no choice but to teach religion with a view of helping learning gain knowledge of what Islam is all about. The question of conversion should be left to the student to make a choice if that is the path they want to take. However it mustn't be done in the learning environment but in church or in the mosque if they so choose to do.

Religious Teaching on the Oneness of God

Teachers of religions are confronted with challenges when the argument of oneness of God is claimed by all three monotheistic religions. Hinduism which the author previously identified as an example of a naturalistic religion belonging to pantheism or and polytheism poses to be a challenge to monotheistic religions if we insist that the end product of teaching religions in higher learning institution is to produce a saint who believes in a God we believe and is prepared to go to heaven to live with God in eternity.

The fact that there are many gods in Hinduism is a serious theological challenge for monotheistic religions. Hinduism originally did not have central authority that regulated the lives as well as activities of its followers. All the three monotheistic religions labels Hinduism as idolaters. There are more gods (Hammer, 1992, p.184) in Hinduism and Bhattacharyya also contends that Hindus worship God through any image of their choice. This means that there are numerous deities worshipped but the common ones are Agni who is the life force of nature, Indra- the sky god, Varuna- the one who upholds the cosmic order, Brahma- the creator, Vishnu- the one who controls human fate, Shiva- the source of good and evil, Sarasvati- the goddess of knowledge, Lakshmi- the goddess of fortune and beauty and Kali- the great mother (Hammer) to mention but a few. There are both male and female gods in Hinduism.

Traditionally Hinduism teaches that all religions are true and are valid pathways to God who is the ultimate reality (Bhattacharyya, 2010, p. 42). They consider any images in the cosmos as deity. What characterizes Hindu worship is meditation and realization. In Hinduism, the path to salvation can be sough though moksha. Moksha is release or deliverance (Hammer, 1992, p.189). This release can be deliverance from anything that is not desirable. E.g. an attachment to the material world is not desirable. For Hinduism, salvation is through (Hammer) the repudiation of evil, grief and decay. To the Hindu, existence has no end. There is a circle of birth and rebirth and one's deeds determines what one shall be born into in the next re-incarnation.

This number of gods so far presents another theological/religious dilemma. Contrary to the claims of monotheism that God is all-knowing, all powerful and is everywhere, there is nothing in pantheism to claim that God is all powerful because each of their gods has an attribute different from the other.

What then should be the reason for teaching such a religion in higher learning institutions in Zambia? We first need to realize that we are in a multipolar society in which there is a mixture of people from all walks

of life and from all parts of the world. Our institutions are also crowded with people from different nationalities. Our students should know what people from other parts of the world believe in. It is wise and important to venture into the another person's worldview to learn and understand why they believe, what makes them be what they are in their practical life.

Judaism has so many differing opinions as to which is the central teaching (Kessler, 2010, p. 90). Not all Jews have one single definition of Judaism this is because some Jews consider it to be a religion, others a culture and while others emphasize nationhood (Kessler). In Judaism Moses is central to rabbinic Judaism. The Jews consider him to be the founder and law giver. According to its teaching he is the first prophet as well as the greatest of all prophets (Cowling, 1992, p.282). It is only Ezra according to rabbinic Judaism who could be compared to Moses. Their high esteem of Ezra is based on the belief that he was the founder and first leader of the great Synagogue.

Judaism believes that there must be only one temple and it ought to be central place of worship and religious sacrifices (Cowling, 1992). Besides temple worship, the other important belief to the Jews is the Torah and Mishnar. The distinct message of the Torah (Banks, 1992, p. 289) is that God has revealed himself to his people. The basic truth central to the tenets of Judaism (Kinlaw, 2005, p. 18) is contained in the Shema as found in the book of Deuteronomy 6:4. To the Jews, the Torah is the divine instructions to be followed through as they pursue righteousness. Apart from this, Judaism further emphasizes the study of the law. The Mishnar constitutes teachings covering many subjects such as teaching on agriculture, the place of women, feasts, legal affairs and property (Banks).

Historical Arguments about Religion

Philosophical Arguments

We cannot development our own arguments concerning religion and understand religions without a glance into the historical debate of what has shaped understanding of religion. Smart (1979, p. 3) has concluded that knowledge about the manifestation of religion and knowledge of religions are important in understanding of what religions is.

In the previous two centuries, philosophy was the launch pad into studying and understanding religions. Emmanuel Kant a well renowned philosopher propagated that philosophy of religion should be used to evaluate religious concepts, practices and beliefs in the context of morality. Schleiermacher who lived between (1768-1834) stated that religious could not be reduced to moral life alone. His contemporary George Hegel (1770-1831) stated that religious concepts were rooted in a given culture and could only be understood in the context of their culture. Ludwig Feuerbach (1803-72) had a completely different view from the previous two. He postulated that religion was a human product which was just a projection of human imagination (Patro 2010). For Feuerbach religions was an idealized projection emanating from the fears and hopes of people.

Anthropological Arguments

Anthropologists who have studied religion had their own way of looking at religion. They argue that religious traditions are a way of life and this way of life emanates from practicing the faith, their rituals and religious symbols (Patro, 2010, p. 12). Religious anthropologists postulate that the focus of religions is to study the meaning of symbols and how that relates to society. Functional anthropologists like Radcliffe Brown argued that religious beliefs and practices should support the culture of society. Evans Pritchard argued that the function of religious anthropologists is to study communities by observing their social life.

Psychological Arguments

The emphasis of psychology of religion is about the varieties of religious experience. The importance of religion for the individual and varieties of religious manifestations are emphasized. Patro(2010) states that, psychologists believe that religion deals with human experiences e.g. experiences of fear, awe, fascination in the presence of sacred entities which are beyond human understanding.

Sociological Arguments

For sociologists, religion was seen as the mainstream in the 'functioning of human society'. They postulated that religion stressed the dimension of power and social change as well as psychological integration (Patro, 2010, p. 14). Quoting Michael Hill, Patro states that the study of religion has four main aspects (i) religious organizations (ii) religion and social cohesion (iii) religions and social change (iv) the combination of the three.

History of the Teaching of Religion in Zambia

Zambians had their way of education before the coming of missionaries (Chizelu, 2006, p. 28). Religion was the way of life of the people; wherever they went they carried it, hence there were no distinction

between the sacred and the secular (Mbiti, 1969, p. 2). So, the absence of western education at a time did not mean that there was no education at all. Furthermore, (Chizelu) states that religious education was always part of overall traditional education that Zambia's indigenous people practiced.

The author argues then, that the history of structured teaching of religion in Zambia is very much connected to the coming of church missionaries and the establishment of missionary schools in most provinces of Zambia with particular emphasis to southern province, Western, Northern provinces and Central province which had a fair share of established mission stations. Missionary presence in Zambia and consequently their establishment of schools paved way for teaching of religion. Ideally, missionary aims of doing this were the conversion of Zambian people to Christianity (Chizelu). Establishment of mission stations was conduit of evangelizing Africans to Christianity (Mwanakawe, 1968, p.11).

In the period between 1890-1924, Religious Education (RE) was offered as religious instruction with denominational bias and confessional in character (Simuchimba, 2005, p.6). Missionaries used the bible as the main teaching material. Of course, young people who went to missionary schools were expected to adhere to church teaching. The intention of missionary education was to reduce the influence of traditional education and pagan beliefs (Chizelu, 2006, 45). What we note from this is an element of feeling of superiority when African/Zambian religion was deemed pagan and backward.

Religious teaching during the colonial era (Chizelu, 2006, p.45) was taught as a complementary to the objectives of creating and increasing a number of Christian converts. Even at the recommendation of the Phelps-Stocks commission appointed by the colonial government to evaluate the opportunities for education for the territory of Zambia, their intention was to promote a rationalized, coordinated education system (Chizelu).

Until 1964, education was still in the hands of the colonial government. There were only such colleges as the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) which was established in 1962 as a staff development college for the civil service. Evelyn Home College was opened in 1963 to offer applied arts and commerce. Northern Technical College (NORTEC) in Ndola opened in 1964 to offer mechanical and electrical engineering. Natural Resources Development College (NRDC) also opened its doors in 1964 to offer agriculture related training (Mwakalombe, 2012, p. 38).

The University of Zambia (UNZA) opened in 1966 to offer universal undergraduate and graduate training in education, law, natural sciences. Education reforms introduced by the UNIP government in 1966 gave the government control over the system of education. Thus there was an establishment of control systems and departments that looked into the affairs of curriculum, quality of teaching, centralized centers for examination preparations and education material publications (Carmody, 2004, p. 24). Robbie affirms that access to education was expanded at all levels so that formal education in literacy, numeracy and skill development could be the catalyst for social economic development; missing to the list of courses was religion. But when it became increasingly clear that the country was becoming multi-religious, colonial aims of religious education became obsolete (Chizelu, 2006, p. 90). What followed were the education reforms of 1977 and 1996.

The 1977 and 1996 educational reforms on religious teaching in Zambia incorporated other faiths. This was to a level that other faiths were elevated and given greater consideration when teaching. The reforms were to suit multi-religious approach to humanism. Humanism in Zambia was promoted by Zambia's first president Kenneth Kaunda in order to suit socialism ideologies. Henze in Chizelu (2006, p. 91) says the teaching of religion was to guide learners to have an open minded and critical evaluation of other religions so as to discover truths for themselves.

Challenges Encountered in the Teaching of Religion

1. When Christianity came to Zambia and consequently introduced into school curriculum, it did so in the space already occupied by African religious beliefs even though these beliefs were not formally taught in school this is mainly because African religion (Booth, 1992, p. 157) is traditionally handed down by oral means. In justifying this argument, Mbiti points out that Africa has a number of religious beliefs and practices which are not systematically formulated into dogmas (1969). Furthermore, African religions have no written scriptures hence they use 'myth as a way of transmitting religious knowledge. Myth is defined as: "Stories by which people express what they believe about the world in which they live. They are the fruit of people's thinking about the way life is, and why things happen as they do." Brown (1975, p. 15).

It is correct then to say that African religions are part of religions that are considered primal religions (Bediako, 2010, p. 19) and are looked upon by the West as backward and primitive in nature. Western anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers etc. have tended to look at such religions with much misunderstanding by labeling them to be savages, heathen, and other derogatory names. Arguably primal religions have not been viewed with value leading to them not being considered as world's major religions. This description itself pits African religions as insignificant as far as making it known to the rest of the world is concerned. Mbiti (1969) justifiably writes that western ideas of labeling African religions as animistic

2. The bulkiness of African religions with so many different beliefs about the gods, creation, sin, eternity has added to the challenges in studying and teaching it. It is difficult to decide which religion within Africa one should teach about or emphasize or which ethnic group should be selected into formulating religious curriculum. Although (Brown, 1975, p. 14) has noted that African religions have something in common which is that their prayers and beliefs about God are handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. However, (Mbiti, 1969, p. 6) noted that it was by the middle of the twentieth century that African religions and philosophy began to be studied with some seriousness as academic discipline. This could have been as a result of discovering that African religions attached ontological reality to the worship of spirit being. Consider the argument by Berglund, who postulated that:
The traditional religion of most of the peoples of southern and central Africa includes belief in a Being who is in some sense the creator and ultimate power of the universe, standing behind a variety of lesser spirits....” Again he says “The Supreme Being holds together the web of relationship between man and his environment. He is the ultimate source of the lesser spirits and of the power of human beings, living and dead’ (Berglund, 1992, p. 162).
Such recognition came as a result of recent studies which convinced the Western world that “African ideas and religious convictions are neither primitive nor backward and without sense” (Berglund). Building upon such understanding, African religious scholarship should write a lot on African religions in order to keep showing the rest of the world its importance and the place it occupies in world religious philosophy.
3. Another challenge to the study and teaching of religion is if we consider indigenous African religions, not so many of these religions have been made known through writing even by those that teach. The reasons are simple. There are not many books expounding on African religions. There are of course few African scholars including the emerging scholars who have written books on the subject of religion in Africa. Names such as Kwame Bediako, JNK Mugambi, John Mbiti, the late Biang Kato, have set a good example of African scholarship in the fields of religion and philosophy helping the world to hear better about indigenous African religions. Sadly many universities and other higher learning institutions in Zambia are still relying on religious books from the Western countries such as America and Canada to inform us about religions of the world and even our own African religions.
4. Additional challenge to the study and teaching of religion is the bulkiness of religions world over and their teachings to be studied. Apart from religions considered ‘major world religions’ Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism; there are other numerous religions in Africa and primal religions that pose a great challenge to teach. Furthermore, all the world religions put together do not have one central teaching. This is different from teaching mathematics or physics or biology. These courses are the same anywhere in the world. Their application too to humanity is the same. Not so with religion; the learner as well as the teacher of religions is confronted with this enormous challenge and care should be taken as to which central tenets of each religion should be most studied and emphasized. Scrutiny should be done in order to concentrate on those aspects in each religion that are fundamental, helpful to the spiritual, moral and social development of its adherents.
5. Although there could be challenges on consensus regarding what is spiritually, morally, socially and culturally helpful; such challenges are helpful in scholarship to help people keep studying and researching. The author argues that religions curriculum should include the teaching on major religions, primal religions and indigenous ones. As to the question on whether teaching should be confessional or education, wisdom is of great importance here. The author believes that in higher learning institutions where multi faith ensues, religious teaching ought to be educational.
6. Furthermore, the theological perspective of looking at religion can possibly be another challenge to the study and teaching of religion. In the paper (The Scope of Comparative Religion), Mugambi says that theological perspective is a virtue. Here God is worshiped through paying homage to him. Jesus’s own understanding of who he is in relationship to God, is the problem to adherents of other faiths like Islam. The Gospels, in the New Testament and the epistles are seen to explain Christ’s relationship to God (Kinlaw, 2005, p.20). Colossians, 1:15, Hebrews 1:1-4, are examples of New Testament passages that talk of Christ’s relationship to the father. It’s in Jesus Christ that the worship of the father is done. For Christians God is worshiped through His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, the theological understanding is already a stumbling block for those whose faith and belief is not in the Christian God. Hence, if Christian theology is to be taught in a class room, it ought only to be educational in nature and not salvific.

Why Religion should be Taught and Pursued with Robustness

All what has been expounded here already pose a challenge to the teaching of religion in Zambia. Developers of curriculum and teachers of religions are already faced with which view or views to teach. On

the other hand, it can be unwise to downgrade the teaching of religion in preference for other fields of study when the study of religion in major universities of the world is being taught with vigor and passion.

Why should Zambian higher learning institutions that do not have religion in their curriculum, include it and teach it? And why should higher learning institutions that teach religion, teach it with the equivalence as that of the natural sciences and other social sciences? In other words why should religion as a subject be as important as the natural sciences? Here are some helpful suggestions: just like the end product of teaching medicine is to produce a medical doctor. The end product of teaching information technology (IT) is to produce a person competent enough to know computer programming and networking. Surely there must be a reason why we should be teaching religion to students in higher learning institutions.

Chizelu offers us some reasons why religion is necessary (2006, p.45). It's a historical fact that during the colonial period, missionaries were the main providers of education. The primary purpose of education was to provide religious teaching; meaning that provision of moral education was at their core (Chizelu, 2006, p. 45). Therefore, the pursuit of morality is a continuous process. It should be encouraged at all levels. We live in a nation that is grappling with vices such as corruption, child abuse and gender violence to mention only a few. So, it is important to teach religion emphasizing morality so that the behavior and attitude of people to one another, to national resources can be that of love, care and stewardship. This is critical in building society as Patro (2010, p. 10) says that all religions have an exaltation on the practice of caring for one another, sharing and nurturing the earth.

Zambia's higher education presently has been emphasizing the pursuit of science and technology and it is evident that some level of development has been achieved. But there is need to pursue religious teaching vigorously due to some reasons as below:

1. Not to belabor the point, religion helps to shape morality. Higher learning institutions should keep teaching religion in order to enable students understand the world, understand peoples of the world and their world views, understand the way of life of other people, their beliefs and practices so that there can be a better relationship and better ways to relate with people who hold different religious traditions. Supporting this statement, here is what Patro has written:

“.. the careful and thorough study of religion is of great practical benefit in a multi-faith world.

A greater understanding of each other can encourage not simply an empty tolerance of difference but also a peaceful and harmonious life together. (Patro, 2010, p. 17)

2. Religion also helps to shape one's morality. Take for instance Christian teachings of the Ten Commandments. The Decalogue or simply ten words according to (Miller, 1998, p. 128) brings order to society. The Ten Commandments creates a foundation for a civil society. In a similar way the five pillars of Islam helps a person to have good morals towards God and fellow man.
3. Religion furnishes the conceptual framework in which science can flourish (Craig). While it's true that world religions make differing claims about creation, the universe, humanity and sin and they cannot all be true. But we need to believe that religion shapes the mind and helps to appeal to moral consciousness to do the right thing in our day to day life choices. Religion with example of Christianity does give a clear and articulate explanation of the existence of the material world. The world says (Craig) is a natural product of a “transcendent God who designed and brought it into being”.
4. Again using arguments as developed by Craig, the author states that religions play a huge significance in shaping the minds of people to know that the claims of religion can be either verified or falsified by science. In the paper “*What is the Relationship between Science and Religion*” p.3, Craig puts forward some explanation. He begins by pointing out some Hindu understanding that the world is divine and therefore eternal i.e. they have always existed is not true. But the scientific discovery of the expansion of the universe shows that the world is not eternal and hence matter, energy and physical space came into existence at some point in time.

At the same time, the above argument verifies the Christian claims that the world has an intelligent designer. Craig points out that in 1929 with the discovery of the expansion of the universe; the Christian doctrine of creation was verified.

Conclusion

It was necessary in this paper to postulate that missionaries were the people that brought about structured ways of learning in Zambia. However religion existed in Africa way before the coming of missionaries. Previously religious belief was handed down by way of mouth. Oral transmission of knowledge was the conduit for the preservation of information for the Africa. So, the introduction of formal teaching through structured learning can be considered as another way of knowledge transmission. This is not to say that it is superior to oral transmission.

Again the coming of missionaries and the introduction of another religion (Christianity) was just an addition. It did not come into an open space where indigenous people had no forms of worship. Certainly because the Zambian has grown to become a multi-religious society, the teaching of religion should be a pluralist approach with consideration given to the importance of each religion taught.

Finally we need to continue teaching religion to keep helping the world appreciate the importance of each religion. This approach will boost religious tolerance and help to build peace in communities and nation and world over.

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