

# **THE VOICE OF THE TEACHER IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: A KWAZULU-NATAL CASE STUDY**

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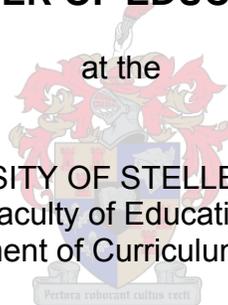
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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. J. J. J. J.", written in a cursive style.

Date: 30 January 2008

## **ABSTRACT**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (CRSA) (1996) ushered in a new dispensation with regard to the human right to 'religious freedom'. Inclusivity in a school context of religious diversity underpins the Religion and Education Policy (2003) which is in turn informed by, and supportive of, the CRSA (1996). To date, the Policy (2003) has not been substantially implemented. In classroom praxis there has been little or no substantial cascading to teachers (and therefore also to learners), of the intention and substance of the Policy (2003).

A possible cause of this is that many teachers do not necessarily understand the meaning of the human right to 'religious freedom'. As a result, they have resisted a multireligion approach to education. The aim of this study was to investigate how teachers construct their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' and how they voice this understanding in a context of religious diversity in schools. Integral to the investigation was an interrogation of the influence of their biographical context in shaping their personal religious identity. The study also considered the impact of the school context in which teachers taught.

This study anticipated the theoretical clarification of how teachers construct their social identities, and in particular their religious identities. This theoretical framework informed what emerged from the empirical research that was conducted. The key concepts of 'religious freedom' and voice were described and clarified by the sources employed in the literature review. It was clear from the literature review that while useful research had been undertaken in aspects relating to the acceptance of, or resistance to, the Policy (2003), no research had grappled sufficiently, if at all, with teachers' understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' and how they constructed this understanding.

In order to conduct this study, an empirical, qualitative research design, including elements of small-scale ethnography, using a case study approach, was employed. Research methods included the use of semi-structured individual and focus group interviews and self-administered questionnaires. The data were triangulated.

From the research it emerged that teachers' biographical context and school context do indeed influence the construction of their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'. The way in which they give voice to this understanding varied. It became apparent that many teachers lacked understanding of religions other than (and in some cases, including) their own. The Policy (2003) was also poorly understood as was the implementation thereof.

Recommendations relating to the problems and shortcomings identified by the research have been made. These include possible intervention strategies by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture; Human Rights Values Education as a teaching approach; and the empowering of teachers by affording them opportunities to engage in emancipatory discourse.

Further research possibilities that can be influenced by this research include issues relating to teacher identity formation; further interrogation of the impact of the teacher's voice; and the inclusion of parents and the school community in the implementation of policy relating to Religion and Education.

## OPSOMMING

Die Grondwet van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika (GRSA) (1996) het 'n nuwe bedeling met betrekking tot die regte van landsburgers ten opsigte van godsdienst- of religieuse-vryheid meegebring. Inklusiwiteit binne 'n skoolkonteks wat gekenmerk word deur religieuse diversiteit word deur die beleid op Religie in die Onderwys (2003) ondervang wat beïnvloed en ondersteun word deur die GRSA (1996). Tot op hede is die beleid op Religie in die Onderwys (2003) nie wesentlik uitgevoer nie. Daarbenewens het klaskamerpraktyk tot nou toe weinig of geen oordrag aan onderwysers (en daarom ook aan leerders) van die bedoeling en inhoud van die Beleid (2003) getoon nie.

'n Moontlike oorsaak hiervan kan wees dat baie onderwysers nie die betekenis van die mens se reg tot godsdienst- of religieuse-vryheid begryp nie. As gevolg hiervan is onderwysers gekant teen 'n multireligieuse benadering in die onderwys. Die doel van hierdie ondersoek was om vas te stel hoe onderwysers hulle begrip van menseregte tot godsdienst- of religieuse-vryheid konstrueer en hoe hulle hierdie begrip in die konteks van 'n verskeidenheid religieuse oortuigings in skole 'verwoord'. 'n Kernaspek van die ondersoek was die vasstelling van die invloed van onderwysers se biografiese konteks by die totstandkoming van hul eie religieuse identiteit. Die ondersoek het ook die impak van die skoolkonteks waarin onderwysers werksaam is in ag geneem.

Met hierdie navorsing is daar gepoog om 'n teoretiese verduideliking te gee oor hoe onderwysers hulle sosiale identiteit konstrueer en veral ook hul religieuse identiteit. Hierdie teoretiese raamwerk is ondersteun deur die data wat uit die empiriese ondersoek te voorskyn gekom het. Sleutelkonsepte soos 'religieuse-vryheid' en 'gesag' is beskryf en verklaar uit die bronne wat in die literatuuroorsig benut is. Uit die literatuuroorsig is dit duidelik dat hoewel daar bruikbare navorsing gedoen is oor aspekte rakende die aanvaarding van teenkants teen die Beleid (2003), geen voldoende navorsing, indien enige, gedoen is oor onderwysers se begrip van religieuse-vryheid as 'n menseregte-aangeleentheid of oor hoe hulle hierdie begrip verstaan nie.

In hierdie navorsing is gebruik gemaak van 'n empiriese, kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie wat elemente van 'n kleinskaalse etnografiese studie insluit. Die navorsingsmetodes het die gebruik van semi-gestruktureerde individuele onderhoude en fokusgroep-onderhoude ingesluit, asook vraelyste wat respondente onafhanklik ingevul het. Die navorsingsdata is getrianguleer.

Die navorsing het getoon dat onderwysers se biografiese konteks sowel as die skoolomgewing hul begrip van die reg tot religieuse-vryheid beïnvloed het. Hoe hulle hierdie begrip 'verwoord' het, het gevarieer. Dit het duidelik geword dat baie onderwysers min of geen begrip het van ander religieë (soms ook hul eie religie of geloofsoortuiging). Die Beleid (2003) is ook swak begryp sowel as die toepassing daarvan.

Aanbevelings is gemaak wat verband hou met die probleme en tekortkominge wat deur die navorsing uitgewys is. Hierdie voorstelle sluit in moontlike ingryping deur die Departement van Onderwys en Kultuur van KwaZulu-Natal; Onderrig in Menseregterwaardes ('Human Rights Values Education') as onderwysbenadering; en die bemagtiging van onderwysers deur aan hulle die geleentheid te bied om deel te neem aan deelnemende gesprekvoering.

Verdere navorsingsmoontlikheide wat deur hierdie studie beïnvloed kan word is aangeleenthede wat verband hou met onderwysers se identiteitsvorming; ondersoek na die impak van die 'stem' van die onderwyser; asook die insluiting van ouers en die skoolgemeenskap by die implementering van die beleid rakende Religie in die Onderwys.

*This thesis is dedicated to the people of my beloved home province, KwaZulu-Natal, and more specifically to the teachers and the learners. My hope is for kinder, more caring relationships to be forged based on mutual understanding and respect.*

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## ACRONYMS

CIE	Catholic Institute for Education
CNE	Christian National Education
CRSA	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
DET	Department of Education and Training (previous apartheid department for Africans in urban areas)
DoE	National Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training (Grades 10 – 12)
GET	General Education and Training (Grades R – 9)
HRV	Human Rights Values
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZNDEC	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture
LO	Life Orientation
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
RE	Religion Education
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SANPAD	South African Netherlands Project on Alternative Developments
SGB	School Governing Body
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SMT	School Management Team
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of and basic orientation to a study undertaken in 2007. The study was to a great extent a response to another research project<sup>1</sup> in which the researcher took part, which focused on understanding human rights and values through interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The researcher was particularly interested in exploring how in-service teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' and consequently decided to engage in research in this regard.

The following aspects of the study are addressed in this chapter:

- the background to the study (1.2.)
- the demarcation of the problem addressed (1.3.)
- the overall aim of the study (1.4.)
- the research question that directed the research design and processes (1.5.)
- the research design, methods and processes (1.6.)
- a conclusion and outline of the chapters to follow (1.7.)

### 1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In September 2003 the South African government introduced its new policy on Religion and Education, conferring upon teachers and learners alike a new-found 'religious freedom' in line with the new Constitution which came into being in 1996. This new policy represented a major change, given the dominance of the Christian National Education model introduced during the apartheid period. The magnitude of the change should not be underestimated. According to Roux (1998:84) *it is extremely difficult for an established community with its given boundaries of culture, community life and religious institutions to accept change.*

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<sup>1</sup> South African Netherlands Project on Alternative Developments (SANPAD) (2005-2007). *Understanding human rights and values through interreligious and intercultural dialogue.*

The ideology of the previous government, which was based on religious views, was directly expressed in the education system in general. It also shaped the way in which religion was dealt with in school curricula. Before the institution of the new democratic dispensation all education in South Africa was required by law to be conducted within the parameters of 'Christian-National Education' (CNE).<sup>2</sup> CNE embodied the principles of the 'Christian-Nationalist' ideology of the National Party which ruled South Africa from 1948 to 1994 (Ashley, 1989; Christie, 1989).

Even before 1948 CNE had a long history, going back to the reaction of the early Dutch settlers who opposed the imposition of a policy of Anglicisation in education following the British occupation of the Cape of Good Hope during the Napoleonic wars in Europe (Van Aswegen, 1990:184-193). The settlers' resistance to this aspect of British imperialism and paternalism was partly a cultural struggle, but this was fused with a powerful religious zeal driven by the Calvinist doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church. This particular expression of Protestantism was shaped by a mindset which was derived essentially from the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which tied religious observance to a territorial principle. As a consequence, religious observance and citizenship were regarded in Christian-National ideology as aspects of one reality (Malherbe, 1925; Rose and Tunmer, 1975; Kallaway, 1984; Rossouw, 1995).

This thinking had profound implications for education in apartheid South Africa and for religious education<sup>3</sup> in particular. During the apartheid years (1948 – 1994) the Christian-National Policy document of 1948 specifically stated that education, especially within the Afrikaner society and schools, should be both Christian and National. All other forms of religious belief (including Christian persuasions which did not adhere to the official positions) were marginalized and discriminated against. The National Education Policy Act of 1967 specifically referred to tenets of the CNE policy of Christian and National education. 'Christian' was to be interpreted as 'CNE Christian' (Hansard, 1967).

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<sup>2</sup> When used with a hyphen, Christian-National Education refers to a particular ideological approach to education.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'religious education' is used to describe religious teaching in schools whatever name it happened to be known by in various contexts. Post-2003 'Religious Education' is replaced by 'Religion Education'.

Although religious education was allocated a discrete slot within the curriculum, religion was not to be limited within the confines of a particular subject. It was required that the influence of religion should be pervasive (Rose & Tunmer, 1975). Religion and nationalism amalgamated, and this fusion sought to infuse all the subjects of the CNE curriculum (Rose & Tunmer, 1975).

CNE required a specific approach in the case of religious education itself. The style in which it was presented was authoritarian, deriving from the rigid form of Calvinism that constituted the 'Christian' element in CNE. While some degree of autonomy was allowed in respect of English-medium schools for 'whites' in Natal, with even that coming under increasing pressure in the 1970s and 1980s, little deviation from CNE policy was permitted elsewhere in South African education. In keeping with the teaching that there should be no mixing of races and cultures, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 removed control of schools for black South African citizens from the traditional churches, where it had previously resided (Rose & Tunmer, 1975) and government control over 'coloured' <sup>4</sup> education also soon followed. CNE policy was enforced without regard for cultural or religious differences.

In state schools for 'white' children only, various attempts were made at revising the religious education syllabus. The subject had a wide variety of names in different contexts, among them, Scripture, Divinity, Religious Knowledge, Bible History, Religious Instruction and Religious Education. However, in 1984 the Committee of Heads of Education favoured the name Bible Education which then became applicable in 'White Education' (Roussouw, 1995). In 'Coloured Education' the only apparent difference was the use of the name 'Scripture' instead of 'Bible Education'. In education for black children only, Subject Policy for Religious Education and Biblical Studies of the Department of Education and Training (DET) was published in 1983, and the name 'Religious Education' was adopted and this subject became examinable. In 'Indian Education', to accommodate the predominately Hindu and Muslim profile of the Indian community, the Department of Indian Affairs, in 1966, introduced the

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<sup>4</sup> It must be acknowledged that for some South African scholars the term 'Black' refers collectively to 'Africans', 'Indians' and 'Coloureds'. In this thesis, however 'Coloured' is used to refer to people of 'mixed race' and 'Black' is used to refer to 'Africans'. 'Indians' and 'Whites' are called by those names. This is shifting nomenclature however, for it seems now that it is politically correct to refer to 'Black Africans' simply as 'Africans'. It must be noted that the researcher does not endorse these politically racial classifications, but uses them for expediency in discussing the process which unfolded in this country, especially with regard to Religion Education.

subject 'Right Living' which focused on general moral axioms by which to live without any specific religious flavour (Summers & Waddington, 1996).

In short, the human right to 'religious freedom' was powerfully subdued and often strangled. Any consideration of human rights issues through multireligion dialogue was rendered impotent in order to preserve Christian-National ideology.

From 1990, in the build-up to the democratic dispensation, there was much discussion about how a new democratic education system might deal with the question of religion in education and schooling in particular. Some people, especially those who had supported CNE in the past, wanted Christianity to be the only religion taught in schools. Others wanted to remove religion completely from schools. The transition from 'old' to 'new' constitutional dispensations necessarily involved a radical shift in relation to religion. As early as 1992, the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), in preparing for democratic transition, insisted that Christian Religious Instruction taught in the name of CNE had to be abandoned. NEPI considered three options: to eliminate religion from the school curriculum; to establish 'parallel' programmes in religious instruction developed by different religious groups (which would entrench a type of 'religious apartheid'); or to introduce a programme of multireligion education which would promote teaching and learning *about* religion as opposed to the teaching *of* religion.

The new Constitution recognized the right to freedom of religion. In the draft National Curriculum Framework for General and Future Education and Training (National Department of Education<sup>5</sup>, 1996) religion was omitted altogether, on the presumption that religion could not appropriately be included as a part of secular state education. The present South African Constitution (Section 15 (1) in the Bill of Rights, 1996), has explicitly guaranteed 'religious freedom' itself in South Africa for the first time.

The Norms and Standards for Teachers document<sup>6</sup> (1998:74) required teachers to show an appreciation of, and respect for, people of different values, beliefs, practices and cultures. Teachers were expected to acquire knowledge of the principles and practices of the main

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<sup>5</sup> From here on referred to as the DoE.

<sup>6</sup> This document identifies seven key roles that teachers are expected to fulfil.

religions represented in South Africa. This expectation was a substantial change from the mono-religious, confessional<sup>7</sup> approach to teaching religion in the CNE framework. The requirements and expectations of the Norms and Standards document (1998) could be viewed as reductionist and technocist in that teachers are expected to put aside their own possible doubts, insecurities, anxieties and concerns about teaching from a multireligion perspective. All that teaching involves, not least in the sensitive area of religion, cannot be captured in the mere listing of the roles of a teacher.

The Policy for Religion and Education (September 2003) was the result of a long research and consultation period that began in the 1990s. When Professor Kader Asmal was appointed Minister of Education in 1999 he appointed an advisory committee who set about the task of drawing up a draft policy that was circulated for comment for the first time in July 2000. After an extensive process of consultation between the minister, educators and religious leaders, as well as a call for public comment on a second draft, the process culminated in the report of the Ministerial Committee on Religious Education in 1999. Deputy Minister of Education, Mr Mosibudi Mangena (2001:1), described the process at the Annual Conference of the Students' Christian Union in Klerksdorp (2001) as follows:

*This comprehensive consultation process ensured that all relevant organisations and the public were afforded an opportunity to participate in the development of policy. Many organisations and individuals provided valuable information and advice to the process of developing a policy for religion in education.*

In line with the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001), the DoE announced its Draft Policy on Religion Education (July 2000), publishing the objective of Religion Education (RE) within a constitutional and human-rights framework. This policy evoked an extended, vigorous public debate and fears were expressed by various religious groups. Groups like the Pestalozzi Trust<sup>8</sup> and Frontline Fellowship<sup>9</sup> argued that the new policy violated their human rights and constitutional rights to freedom of religion. Another example

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<sup>7</sup> A confessional approach entails that the state or school decides which set of beliefs will be presented as the one true religion.

<sup>8</sup> A Christian organisation for home schooling

<sup>9</sup> A Christian organisation for evangelising Africa

of what emerged in this debate could be seen in a submission to the DoE by the South African Council of Churches (SACC, 2003). The opinions of the SACC were significant in view of its history of outspoken opposition to the apartheid policy and education model and its strong connections with key figures in the new government. The SACC submission did not seek to promote the kind of religious instruction approach that had characterised South African education previously and it expressed support for the tri-fold emphasis in RE that is educational, that explores diversity, and that stresses common values of equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour. In Paragraph 6 (2003) the following statement was made:

*We further endorse the adoption of a cooperative model of religion education that does not attempt to impose a particular religion on learners ... [W]e applaud the Policy's recognition of the need to acknowledge the relevance of religion to all educational disciplines and in all stages of human development ... to produce well-rounded and responsible citizens.*

The SACC submission came near the end of a long process in which a range of alternatives to the initial omission of religion from education had been mooted in discussions between the DoE and various interest groups. The final National Policy on Religion in Education (DoE, 2003) endorsed the acceptance of religion as an essential component of the curriculum. It was followed by the publication of Draft National Curriculum Statement for 'Religion Studies'<sup>10</sup> (DoE, 2004) and the National Curriculum Statement Source Book for the Teaching of 'Religion Education'<sup>11</sup> (DoE, 2005). Both titles, it must be noted, avoided the use of the word 'Religious', on account of its association with Religious Instruction and Religious Education used in the previous political dispensation. They underlined the point that it was not part of the purpose of state education to make people religious but to educate them about religion through the teaching and learning process.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Religion Studies' is an elective National Senior Certificate subject.

<sup>11</sup> The term *Religion Education* is used in the National Curriculum Statements (DoE, 2002; 2003) and the National Policy on Religion and Education (2003) to refer to the curricular programme for teaching and learning about religions, beliefs and worldviews in the Learning Area (Grades 4 – 9) or Subject (Grades 10 – 12) Life Orientation (DoE, 2003:11; 2003:9).

The Religion and Education Policy (2003) promoted a co-operative model for schools and recognized religious diversity while protecting learners from discrimination and coercion. The then minister of Education, Kader Asmal (Asmal, 2003), argued that religion in schools should be handled respectfully and sensitively and within the framework of tolerance<sup>12</sup> and human rights as set out in the Constitution. Many aspects of the policy were drawn from the United Nations Bill, the 'Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief' (1981).

Mangena (2001:2), representing the Ministry of Education, said that religion could play an important role in preserving the heritage of South Africa and building solid values for the future. He acknowledged that the public education system was *home to learners from a range of beliefs* and that constitutionally these various beliefs should be respected and upheld and therefore the public schooling system could not *promote one belief at the expense of any other*. Knowledge and understanding of various beliefs needed to be shared with the learners.

The current Religion and Education Policy was officially introduced in September 2003. Previously unheard voices could now be articulated. According to Fourie (2003:100), teachers and learners alike found themselves, for the first time, functioning within a context of a new-found 'religious freedom', this being entirely in keeping with the principles of the new Constitution (1996).

The foundational values of the new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa were enshrined in the general, cross-curricular outcomes to which all South African education, in all forms and at all levels, should be directed. The aims of the Constitution (1996) were listed at the beginning of the introduction to the National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2002; 2003), and were reproduced in the 'Statements' for each of the learning areas of the curriculum (cf. DoE, 2003<sup>13</sup>). The values that were expressed in these aims were therefore central to the

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<sup>12</sup> Tolerance: *Liberty to uphold one's religious opinions and forms of worship or to enjoy all social privileges ... without regard to religious differences.* (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1958)

<sup>13</sup> Curriculum Statements for the Life Orientation learning area Grades R – 9

school curriculum as a whole, but they were especially important to Life Orientation (LO)<sup>14</sup> where RE falls into the area of learners' 'social development'<sup>15</sup> in the General Education and Training (GET)<sup>16</sup> band. Here the learning outcome for the Social Development aspect of LO states that *[t]he learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions* (RNCS: Life Orientation, 2003). In the Further Education and Training (FET)<sup>17</sup> band, RE is situated in the LO learning outcome for Responsible Citizenship in which *[t]he learner is able to demonstrate competence and commitment regarding the values and rights that underpin the constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship, and enhance social justice and sustainable living* (National Curriculum Statement (Grades 10 – 12), 2002).

The researcher endorses the sentiment and principles expressed in the Religion and Education Policy (2003), as it redressed the religious imposition of the previous dispensation. However, the researcher is concerned about the implementation of these sentiments (or lack thereof) and principles in practice, in South African schools. The researcher would like to suggest that for teachers to implement the Religion and Education Policy (2003) wholeheartedly, they have to first understand and 'own' the human right to 'religious freedom'.

This research study sought to explore what selected KwaZulu-Natal teachers understood by 'religious freedom' and also to probe the degree of implementation of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) in classroom practice. Such an investigation was particularly valid in the diverse religious context within which teachers in South Africa operated.

There was some evidence that while some teachers did not fear the inclusion of RE in the curriculum, others were uneasy and displayed signs of fear and discomfort in doing so. According to Roux (2005a:305), *the majority of teachers in public schools who have to implement the new policy seemed to be negative about the diversity of religions and are also not equipped with knowledge or understanding of the diversity of religions*. Teachers who

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<sup>14</sup> Life Orientation is one of the eight learning areas in the GET Outcomes-based Curriculum (1997 & 2001).

<sup>15</sup> Life Orientation focuses on learners' social development, personal development and physical development. The context of social development includes learning about human rights, democratic participation, diversity and community.

<sup>16</sup> The GET band comprises Grades R – 9. Grade R is the reception class which precedes Grade 1. Grades R – 3 (Foundation Phase), Grades 4 – 6 (Intermediate Phase), Grades 7 – 9 (Senior Phase).

<sup>17</sup> Grades 10 – 12

were deeply committed to a particular religion may have felt uncomfortable about presenting a multireligion education programme. They may have seen it as a betrayal of their religion (Mitchell, Mndende, Phiri & Stonier, 1993). This also applied to pre-service teachers many of whom found the paradigm shift from a mono-religious to a multireligion<sup>18</sup> programme very difficult (Roux, 2005a). Other research in South Africa (Roux & Steenkamp, 1995; Roux, 1996; Ferguson, 1999; Ferguson & Roux, 2003b) has shown that pre-service teachers who had changed their perceptions in order to facilitate the new multireligion programme could quite easily be influenced again to the contrary in an unenthusiastic and biased school environment.

In this study the researcher investigated what selected teachers in KwaZulu-Natal schools understood by 'religious freedom' and how they voiced this human right from the perspective of their own biographical context, and what influence their school context exerted on their understanding of 'religious freedom' and the translation thereof into praxis<sup>19</sup>.

### 1.3. DEMARCATION OF THE PROBLEM

South Africans find themselves in a religiously diverse society in which people claim allegiance to Christianity, African Religions, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and a plethora of worldviews. Each of these religions embraces a diversity encompassing many different interpretations and applications. Religious diversity therefore seems to be a fact of life for South African society as a whole.

CNE translated into a biased monologue about religion, silencing and oppressing many contrary voices (Instituut vir Christelike Nasionale Onderwys, 1948 in Rose & Tunmer, 1975:119ff). However, the South African Religion and Education Policy (2003) made it possible for these voices to be articulated. This Policy (2003:2) addressed the human right to 'religious freedom' which was explicitly guaranteed in South Africa for the first time. What needed to be investigated was whether or not teachers had an understanding of the human

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<sup>18</sup> The term 'multireligion' describes a programme, or approach, in teaching and learning about various religions and worldviews.

<sup>19</sup> This constitutes practical action. It is about taking action and reflecting upon the action in order to inform new action (Roux & Du Preez, 2006).

right to 'religious freedom'. Even where whole-school policy advocated inclusion, it needed to be established whether or not teachers were speaking with different voices about 'religious freedom'. A further consideration was whether or not there were teachers who were remaining silent, thereby offering no voice at all.

Whilst the Religion and Education Policy (2003) addressed 'religious freedom' as a human right and required that it should be implemented as such in schools, the researcher had become aware of state schools which had clung to the old order and not made the necessary adjustments. While the researcher was tutoring pre-service teachers in a variety of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools as part of their Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) professional practice experience<sup>20</sup> she became aware that while many school policies included words such as 'inclusion', often this was not taken seriously. The reality was that people of minority religions were included as long as they were assimilated into the dominant ethos of the school. No endeavour, or in some cases only a cosmetic endeavour, was made to incorporate interreligious<sup>21</sup> dialogue. Little or no religious dialogue was taking place and often staff and learners of minority religious groups felt marginalized and/or patronized. The researcher also noted with interest that in some school contexts there was such an emphasis on trying to include minority groups that the majority group became scripted out. Some Former Model C schools<sup>22</sup> had seen considerable demographic change and yet in most cases, as observed by the researcher, this was not reflected in how the learners experienced the reality of religious diversity. Similarly, demographic change had, in some cases, meant that a different religious group had become numerically dominant and other groups had become marginalized. In such cases, where certain discourses were dominant, dialogue was difficult.

Some South African teachers, such as those belonging to Theocentric Christian Education<sup>23</sup>, expressed the view that the Religion and Education Policy (2003) was underpinned by a

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<sup>20</sup> At UKZN, BEd students engaged in professional practice experience for four weeks in each year of their studies. The PGCE students spent a total of eight weeks in schools.

<sup>21</sup> 'Interreligious dialogue' refers to dialogue between different religions.

<sup>22</sup> Model C schools were at first schools that only white children could attend. Since 1993, these schools changed their admission requirements, and are called Former Model C schools. These schools are mainly situated in good middle-class and higher income suburbs and are becoming more multi-cultural and multireligion in composition.

<sup>23</sup> Theocentric Christian Education comprises a body of home schoolers.

postmodernist worldview, assuming, as it does, that there is no absolute truth, but rather various subjective truths. These teachers felt that their voice was not being heard and that the agenda of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) was actually to promote secular humanism and to 'water down' religions, and especially the exclusive nature of Christianity (Shortridge & Shortridge, 2001). Research by Ferguson and Roux (2003b) has shown that many practising teachers found it very difficult to engage with the new curriculum and the theories which underpinned it and that they still relied on a fundamentalist and confessional approach to RE. The researcher would venture to suggest that these teachers had not successfully understood the human right to 'religious freedom'.

It was reasonable to anticipate that some teachers would feel threatened and insecure, and perhaps frustrated, in a multireligion context. South African teachers teach in diverse educational circumstances and environments. For example, many teach in economically deprived rural or township areas while others teach in well-resourced schools in suburban areas. Potentially, the diversity of teaching environments may also reflect different worldviews. School communities in rural and township areas – mainly mono-religious (and mono-ethnic) communities – could well feel threatened by the introduction of different worldviews to the learners (cf. Roux, 1997:65).

Many teachers expressed the fear that introducing learners to several religions, especially when they are young (typically in the Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phases), would cause confusion. Roux (2003:132) conducted research in this regard and developed a system of 'colour coding'<sup>24</sup> to minimize potential confusion. In order to identify different religions, this system employs colours widely used by these religions. Through the introduction of this system in the Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phases (Grades R – 3) learners learn to associate particular religions with particular colours, thereby obviating confusion.

Comments made by students who participated in a semi-structured focus group interview facilitated by the researcher as part of a South African Netherlands Project for Alternative

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<sup>24</sup> The following colours indicate the colour or any other artifact of the religion: Judaism (blue), Islam (green), Hinduism (red), Buddhism (orange), Christianity (purple), Traditional African Religion (white).

Development (SANPAD) project (2005-2007), *Understanding human rights and values through interreligious<sup>25</sup> and intercultural dialogue*, highlighted the point that several teachers had chosen to remain silent in the debate and go with whatever the status quo in their school may have been, thereby resisting becoming agents of change with regard to promoting 'religious freedom' in schools. The students who were interviewed also commented on the way in which some teachers stereotyped adherents of various religious groups in various ways, either formally during lessons, or in less formal interactions with learners. Religious stereotyping ran counter to the spirit embedded in the human rights culture formalized in the CRSA Bill of Rights (1996), and more specifically it infringed on the right to 'religious freedom'.

Given the position of authority held by teachers, it stood to reason that the voice (or lack thereof) used by teachers to reflect their position on issues of 'religious freedom' and attitudes towards those with other beliefs and/or worldviews, could influence learners. It would be reasonable to presume that the way in which 'religious freedom' was facilitated in schools and, more specifically in classrooms, would surely affect learners' understanding of 'religious freedom'. The SANPAD project (2005-2007) previously referred to, showed that teachers could have a great influence on learners' understanding of human rights including that of 'religious freedom'.

The teachers' own understanding of 'religious freedom' was thus of paramount importance. Roux (1998) further argued that teachers themselves had to undergo a paradigm shift if they were to engage successfully within a context of religious diversity. The Norms and Standards for Educators Document (DoE, 1998) and other policy documents such as the RNCS in South Africa (DoE, 2002) also assumed that an educational and social paradigm shift for teachers was needed.

If teachers tried to understand the human right to 'religious freedom' from within their own frame of reference exclusively they were bound to experience 'paradigm paralysis'. They may have recognized new ideas as possibly better, but may have lacked the will and/or ability

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<sup>25</sup> *Interreligious*, referring to conversations and dialogue between different religions, is not to be confused with *intrareligious*, which refers to conversations and dialogue between groups/denominations of the same religious tradition (Roux, 2007a).

to change, thereby demonstrating 'paradigm paradox'. Others, however, may have recognized that there was a need for a multireligion approach and implemented this, thereby exercising 'paradigm flexibility' (Roux, 1998). Whilst it may have been challenging to shift from an established (and in most cases confessional) paradigm to one that was inclusive, such a shift needed to take place if any effective conversation were to occur and if learners were to gain an understanding of human rights and, more specifically, the right to 'religious freedom'. Roux (1998:84) contended that

*looking to the future from one's old paradigms will ... not help to shape the future, but will filter other incoming experiences in such a way that creative thinking may not take place and opportunities may not be grasped.*

Teachers needed to be encouraged to think reflectively and critically about their particular standpoints and positions in respect of religious diversity. They needed to be able to recognize that while they were products of a particular socio-political and religious context they could act to free themselves from any constrained and restrictive thinking it may have imposed. Significantly, in their classroom praxis, teachers should have reflected and acted upon their own context of learning in order to shape (verbally and non-verbally, formally and informally) the teaching and learning context of learners.

The human right to 'religious freedom' was embedded in the Religion and Education Policy (2003). It stood to reason that if a teacher understood the human right to 'religious freedom' he/she would understand the need for a policy such as the Religion and Education Policy (2003) and the implementation thereof. Understanding 'religious freedom' as a human right should also have allayed the fear of having to compromise his/her own religion and enabled the teacher to facilitate the opportunity for teaching and learning about the religious diversity represented in South Africa.

#### 1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

In the background and demarcation of the study a few of the key issues concerning this study were mentioned. To narrow these issues down, the main objectives of the research to be reported on are provided:

- to give a description of social identity theory as the theoretical framework for this study;
- to clarify the concept 'religious freedom' as a human right;
- to provide a description and literature review on contemporary related research;
- to show how teachers in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools construct their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom';
- to show how teachers' own biographical context plays a role in this construction;
- to interrogate the role of the school context in this construction;
- to investigate how teachers voice their understanding of 'religious freedom'.

### 1.5. RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question in this study is: *How do teachers in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools construct their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?*

In order to address the research question the following subsidiary questions are interrogated:

- How does the selected group of teachers voice the human right to 'religious freedom' from the perspective of their own biographical context?
- How does the school context in which teachers operate influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?

### 1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS AND PROCESSES

In the following section the nature of the research question in relation to the approaches to be used to gather the necessary data and to elucidate questions raised are discussed as a basis for interpretation and analysis purposes. This is elaborated upon in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

### 1.6.1 Research design

The research design outlines the plan to be used to conduct the research. In this study the research design was empirical and qualitative in nature with elements of small-scale ethnography.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:280) it is only within approximately the last 20 years that case study research has become *scientifically respectable*. It can be defined as a form of study having as its emphasis an individual unit. The case study thus provided the opportunity to conduct an examination of selected teachers within their school contexts. Anderson (1999:152) says that *education is a process and, at times, requires a research method which is process oriented, flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances and a dynamic context*. Given these boundaries, the exploratory case study method, using primary data, was used, focusing on selected teachers within a specific school community. This design seemed to be suited to this research study which focused on selected voices in specific school contexts in KZN.

Basic research, qualitative in nature, was employed to determine how the understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' was constructed and interpreted by teachers. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003:4), qualitative research *consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible*. This particular methodology would give the KZN teachers who participated in the case study the opportunity to voice their understanding of 'religious freedom'. This research also had the propensity to reveal how teachers, embedded in particular school contexts, could possibly shape the religious discourse in the classroom experience. The methodology used in this study was also concerned with the way in which teachers gave meaning to the Policy on Religion and Education (2003) and their experiences thereof (cf. Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:199).

To successfully adopt an inductive approach the researcher had, of necessity, to become familiar with each teacher's natural setting, working from the inside out (as opposed to imposing an existing theory), allowing each context to speak for itself. An important focus of this research study was to give an in-depth or *thick description* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:309)

of the issues. In their description of qualitative researchers, Denzin and Lincoln (2003:16) contend that these researchers *are committed to an emic<sup>26</sup>, idiographic, case-based position, which directs their attention to the specifics of particular cases.*

Backett-Milburn (1999:72) addresses the need for awareness of the socially constructed nature of data and *interviewer effects*. Schutz (in Babbie & Mouton, 2001) speaks of *multiple realities* and the need to research with respondents, giving respondents' explanations as to why the research was conducted in a particular way. For the purposes of this study the researcher employed both an *insider* and *outsider* position (McCutcheon, 1999) in order to diminish subjectivity that had the potential to influence analysis and the conclusions.

The methodology of this study was required to complement the proposed research design. The qualitative, small-scale ethnographic framework of the study required data collection from teachers in diverse school contexts. The intention was to complete data collection in one school before moving into another school context.

#### **1.6.1.1. Data collection**

In order to find answers to the proposed research question, a literature study was undertaken. According to Mouton (2001:87), the researcher's interest should not merely be in the literature as such, but in the body of collective scholarships underlying the literature. The literature study employed in this thesis reviewed the nature and origin of 'religious freedom' as a human right, current issues concerning the facilitation of human rights, and approaches to the implementation of RE in the curriculum. *Primary data* (Mouton, 2001:71-72) to be utilized was captured through self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews.

The collection of primary data took place in three selected KZN primary schools. The one school was a Former Model C school, the other a Former HoD school and the other a peri-

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<sup>26</sup> Where the 'actor's perspective', in this case, that of the teacher, is emphasised.

urban black school<sup>27</sup>. The reason for selecting these schools was to investigate three different contexts in terms of demographics and resourcing. These schools were also fairly representative of GET government schools in KZN.

This study was located in the GET Phase and so Grades 4 – 6 teachers were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire comprising both closed- and open-ended questions. The questions were constructed in order to establish how teachers' biography and school context possibly influenced their understanding of 'religious freedom'. The researcher met with the relevant teachers and explained the process and provided any necessary clarification with regard to the questions.

Semi-structured interviews, according to Rubin and Rubin (1995:5), should be engaged in when the researcher wants more specific information. Hence, a semi-structured individual interview was conducted with the principal of each of the three participating schools in order to establish a thick description of the school and the school policy and management position with regard to 'religious freedom' in the school.

Semi-structured focus group interviews were held with Grade 6 LO teachers in each school. The purpose of this interview was to establish in more detail teachers' understanding of 'religious freedom' (as influenced by their biographical and school contexts), their perspectives on facilitating RE as part of LO and their views on the possible influence of the school context on classroom practice.

The intention in using a focus group in each of the three schools was to observe interaction between participants which a one-on-one interview does not facilitate. It also provided the opportunity for the researcher to become familiar with the contexts in which the participants found themselves.

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<sup>27</sup> 'Former Model C schools' refers to schools that were formerly 'white' schools under the apartheid regime. 'Former HoD schools' refers to the House of Delegates schools which were formerly 'Indian' schools. The 'peri-urban black school' refers to a school that is 'black' in staff and learner composition and situated on the rural urban fringe.

The interview schedules consisted of open-ended but semi-structured questions to guide the interviews. This was necessary to provide an orderly experience to the respondents and to ensure that each principal and each focus group was asked a comparable set of questions. Structured questions were posed, but where the respondents' answers were relevant to the research, continued probing took place (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2001:646). The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed, and augmented by extensive field notes (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275).

Data was collected from the questionnaires and from the individual and focus group interviews. The data was analysed and findings and interpretations recorded.

### **1.6.1.2. Analysis**

The analysis of the questionnaires and interviews facilitated the presentation of new knowledge constructs regarding the initial research question. Although this is discussed in detail in Chapter 4, a brief overview is given here.

Vithal and Jansen (1997:27) note the importance of *scanning* and *cleaning* the data. Preparing data for analysis involved reading the data and checking for incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent and irrelevant responses. Preliminary trends were then identified in the scanned data and the data was then organized into meaningful 'chunks'. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that all material should be categorized into themes and concepts and then linked to the underlying theory. This process, which is also referred to as *domain analysis*, in which *ideas or concepts go together to form a cluster of related terms and processes* (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:247), was employed by the researcher. Only after the process of *domain analysis* (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:247) had taken place could the data meaningfully be synthesized and interpreted by the researcher, triangulated<sup>28</sup>, linked to existing theory and efficiently represented, taking note of limitations in the study.

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<sup>28</sup> In the process of triangulation a comparison was made between responses to the self-administered questionnaires and to similar questions asked in the interview with the school principal and with the focus group.

## 1.7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to give an overview of the research that was undertaken. It seemed that with the adoption of the CRSA Bill of Rights (1996) and more specifically the Policy on Religion and Education (2003) and the assumed paradigm shift to implementing a multireligion approach to education, it was important to establish what teachers understood by 'religious freedom'. The way in which teachers voiced this understanding could well be influenced by teachers' biography and school context.

In order to investigate teachers' understanding of 'religious freedom', an empirical, qualitative research design was employed using self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured individual and semi-structured focus group interviews. The interviews served as a means to triangulate data collected from the questionnaires.

The following is an outline of the remaining chapters of this thesis:

**Chapter 2** offers an exploration of the theoretical framework for this study, namely social identity theory. Key concepts such as 'religious freedom' and 'voice' are clarified. This chapter also reviews literature related to this study.

**Chapter 3** offers a detailed description of the research design, specific methodologies used, the research process that was employed, the sampling strategies used, methods used to assure triangulation, and ethical considerations regarding the research processes.

**Chapter 4** presents the data gathered from the self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with the teachers, the analysis of the captured data and a comprehensive discussion of the main trends and patterns in the data.

In **Chapter 5** a summary of the findings is presented. Limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations that emerged from the study are provided. Issues for further research are suggested.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the research question and the related subsidiary questions were described. It was proposed that this study should investigate how teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'. To explore this issue it seemed necessary to consider theories that could inform the empirical research that would provide a framework for making sense of the data.

The following procedures are followed in this chapter:

- A theoretical framework, namely that of social identity theory<sup>29</sup> is provided and discussed (2.2.2.).
- Power relations (2.2.2.3.) and the theoretical notion of 'structure' and 'agency' are discussed (2.2.3.1.) with particular reference to religious identity.
- The concept of 'religious freedom' as a human right is clarified (2.3.1.1.).
- Approaches to teaching in a context of religious diversity are suggested (2.3.1.2.).
- The concept of 'voice' is discussed and clarified (2.3.2.).
- The chapter is concluded with a précis of the main issues explored in this chapter (2.4.).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994:18), such a conceptual/theoretical context or framework *explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts or variables – and the presumed relationships among them.* This framework helped in assessing the purposes of this study and in developing relevant research

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<sup>29</sup> The researcher considered using social construct theory as a theoretical framework for this study, but decided that social identity theory was more suited to the elements of teacher's biographical context and the notion of teacher's voice in a context of religious diversity.

questions and methods. It also helped to identify potential threats to the validity of conclusions.

The researcher brought experiential knowledge (personal experience) to this research: *It [made] me who I am as a person and as a researcher, equipping me with the perspectives and insights that shape[d] all that I [did] as a researcher* (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992:104). Reason (1981) contends that critical subjectivity should be allowed to be used as part of the process of inquiry. The researcher followed this approach, which lent an element of autoethnography to the research. This was valid because in many ways it was the researcher's own experience and interest that had led to this particular research design and topic (cf. 1.3.; 4.5.).

Other people's theories and empirical research were also a source in establishing theory that was inductively developed during the study and which constantly interacted with the data from the study. In this qualitative research project both existing theory and empirical data are valid and valuable. The theory of social identity informed what emerged from the empirical research. It provided a framework for making sense of the data that was collected. A review of relevant prior empirical research provided a counterweight to ideological theory and research and showed how this research addressed an important need.

In order to conceptualise how teachers constructed their identity and how this impacted on their understanding of 'religious freedom' it was necessary for the researcher to introduce theories which provided different perspectives on the construction of identity.

In this chapter an exploration of identity (both personal and social) is undertaken and key concepts, 'religious freedom' and 'voice' discussed and clarified.

## 2.2. IDENTITY THEORY

### 2.2.1. Self identity

Jenkins (1996:7) suggested that

... [a]t every turn we encounter discourses about identity. And not only identity. The talk is also about change: the emergence of new identities, the resurgence of old ones, and the transformation of existing ones.

Francis (2005) contends that in South Africa, a society undergoing rapid social change, there has been a resurgence in issues of identity reflecting this change. Since the abandonment of apartheid, South Africans have had the opportunity of *reshaping new identities and fashioning a new set of understandings about who they are and what they consider to be of fundamental value to themselves* (Francis, 2005:12).

Identity has been described as an umbrella term used throughout the social sciences for an individual's understanding of him- or herself as a discrete, separate entity (Wikipedia, 2007). Psychologists use the term 'identity' to describe 'personal identity', which is derived from personal characteristics and individual relationships. Giddens (2002:53) defines self identity as that which is *reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his own biography*. Popkewitz (1997:132) defined 'biography' as *particular, historically formed knowledge that ensures rules and standards by which the individual reasons about the world and him- or herself as a member of that world*. Giddens (2002:75) suggests that *the self forms a trajectory of development from the past to the anticipated future*. The individual would thus appropriate his/her past (his/her biography) by sifting through it in the light of what is anticipated for the future. Giddens (2002:76) postulates that *biography is actually at the core of self identity*. Thus identity could be seen as the *core* of the person or a more segmented identity which is produced by discourse<sup>30</sup> (Bendle, 2002).

#### **2.2.1.1. 'Identity crisis'**

Erikson (1968) popularized the concept 'identity' and introduced the idea that the social, cultural and historical context is the ground in which individual identity is embedded. He suggested that identity involves an interaction connecting the *interior development of the individual personality, and the growth of a sense of selfhood that occurs from participating in*

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<sup>30</sup> 'Discourse' includes ways of speaking, behaving, thinking, valuing, interacting and feeling.

*society* (Francis, 2005:18). Erikson (ibid.) coined the term 'identity crisis'<sup>31</sup> and contended that identity formation ended just before adulthood when any 'identity crisis' was resolved.

This concept of identity, however, failed to take into account the fact that identity changes over time in relation to the development of a society; that it is *an on-going negotiated process* (Francis, 2005:19). People often make choices among various identities as they move from one circumstance to another. Erikson (1968) postulates that society is unchanging and constant. He places more emphasis on the personality of the individual and fails to take into account social forces that contribute to the development of the self.

Although Erikson's theory is open to criticism, his main contribution, that of the 'identity of two identities', namely the 'core of the individual' and 'the core of communal culture', remains relevant. He also suggests that the way in which a community identifies an individual is constantly compared to the way in which an individual compares him- or herself to others (Erikson, 1968).

Francis (2005:20) contends that

*... exploring how individuals make sense of 'who they are' requires an understanding of the society-individual relationship, more specifically with regard to social identity.*

### **2.2.2. Social identity theory**

Sociologists, in most instances, used the term 'identity' to describe 'social identity'. According to Francis (2005), the relationship between the individual and society is crucial to understanding how identity is constructed and experienced. Newman's (1997) view is that identity has become a medium for defining the self in terms of the individual's social group or category membership. Newman (1997:20) describes identity as

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<sup>31</sup> Erikson defined 'identity crisis' as the difficulty encountered by some adolescents in achieving an adult identity.

*... our most essential and personal characteristic. It consists of our membership in social groups (race, ethnicity, religion, gender and so on), the traits we show and the traits others ascribe to us. Our identity locates us in the social world, thoroughly affecting everything we do, feel, say and think in our lives.*

Thinking of oneself as a unique individual and as a group member constitutes both parts of the self.

Jenkins (1996:4) explains that all human identities are in some sense, *social* identities. According to Jenkins (1996) 'self' and 'identity' are to be used interchangeably. 'Self' is the individual's private experience of him- or herself. In perceiving 'self' as 'parallel' to identity Jenkins (1996:29 - 30) defines it as

*... [the] individual's reflexive sense of her or his own particular identity, constituted vis-à-vis others in terms of similarity and difference, without which we would not know who we are and hence would not be able to act.*

Hogg and Abrams (1988) maintain that society comprises of social categories and argue that these categories include division of people on the basis of nationality, ethnicity, class, occupation, gender and religion. Jenkins (1996) explains that people collectively identify themselves and others, and conduct their lives in terms of those identities, which has practical consequences.

Theorists like Harter (1977) and Adams (2003) stress that a concept of self does not initially exist at birth but develops only in the process of social relations. These theorists, known as symbolic interactionists, postulate that the attitudes of significant others have the main impact on the formation of the self. The self is seen to develop only in social and cultural contexts. The individual rather than the institution is emphasized. This theory has three basic premises as described in Baez (2000), namely that human activity is based on the meaning that

individuals have for objects<sup>32</sup>; that meanings are developed when the individual who identifies him- or herself as 'self' interprets meanings for objects by interacting with that 'self'; and that meanings are derived and arise out of social interaction.

This theory does not, however, take into account the complexities of modern social organization, or the consequence of social conflict upon the formation of social identity (Adams, 2003). However, symbolic interactionists would say that although structural barriers are important influences in individual's choices, individuals are resourceful and able to resist negative forces and actively negotiate their existence.

This study was concerned with social identities, described by Tajfel (in Francis, 2005:16) as

*... the aspects of an individual's self concept that derives from one's being part of categories and groups, together with the value and emotional significance attached to those memberships.*

The 'social identity theory' (SIT) could be attributed to Tajfel (1978) and Turner (1982, 2000) who formed this theory in order to understand the relationship between *individual behaviour as it interacts with its social context* (Francis, 2005: 21). This theory also investigated the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination, focusing on the role of self-categorization. It tried to demonstrate how categorizing him- or herself as part of a specific group could lead an individual to act in a discriminating way and how even a cognitive distinction drawn between in- and out-groups could lead to an evaluation of others.

SIT contends that an individual is made up of several 'selves' that correspond to circles of group membership. In different social contexts an individual may think, feel and act on the basis of his/her personal, family or notional 'level of self' (Turner, 1982). Hogg and Vaughan (2002) suggest that apart from the 'level of self', a person has multiple 'social identities' which are derived from perceived membership of social groups. According to the notion of 'social identity' individuals label themselves as members of particular groups (e.g. ethnic group, culture, nation, gender, religion) and are likely, at least in part, to derive a sense of identity from that in-group. That sense of identity is enhanced by making comparisons with out-

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<sup>32</sup> 'Objects' here is understood as that to which can be indicated or referred.

groups. SIT comprises of the following three components: categorization, identification and comparison.

### **2.2.2.1. Categorization, identification, comparison**

Categorization takes place when individuals place others (and themselves) in categories in order to understand the social environment. Tajfel (1978:61) describes social categorization *as the ordering of the social environment in terms of groupings of persons in a manner that makes sense to the individual*. Categorization involves labelling people by using social categories like nationality, ethnicity, language and religion. By knowing what categories he/she belongs to a person is able to know more about him- or herself and others. Turner, Tajfel's colleague at Bristol University, suggests that at the level of self-categorization, people tend to see themselves less as individual persons (defined by their personal differences from others) and more as interchangeable representatives of their social group (Turner, 2000). They would define themselves by their intragroup<sup>33</sup> similarities and intergroup<sup>34</sup> differences. Turner (ibid.) explains that a shared group identity leads members to co-operate for common group goals rather than to compete for individual advantage. So, for example, if an individual defines him- or herself in terms of group membership to a particular religion, in any particular situation that individual would then perceive him- or herself to a lesser degree as a unique individual and assert him- or herself in terms of the shared group identity of that particular religion.

Identification is the process that occurs when individuals associate with certain groups that they perceive themselves to belong to. Identification with their 'in-group' makes people feel as if they belong and bolsters their self-esteem. Identifying as a group member ('social identity') is a real and vital form of concept of self. Tajfel (1978) explains that social interaction could be exclusively interpersonal or exclusively intergroup, the latter taking place when the interaction is determined by the individual's group membership. Tajfel (ibid.) suggests that each individual has a selection of identities open to him/her (social and personal), each of which informed the individual's identity. Which of these identities was appropriate for an individual at any time would vary according to the social context. Turner

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<sup>33</sup> Comparison between members within the same group

<sup>34</sup> Comparison of different groups with one another

(1982) proposes that in certain contexts social identity is more prominent than personal identity and in other situations it is the other way around. It is the process whereby the individual becomes part of a social group and the group becomes part of the individual's self-concept. According to Francis (2005:23), the type of interaction depends *on whether their personal uniqueness or social group identification control[s] the content of the interaction.*

Social comparison constitutes the third component of SIT. Festinger's (1954, in Wikipedia, 2007) notion of social comparison is that in order to evaluate him- or herself, an individual compares him- or herself with similar others, seeing a favourable bias towards the group to which he or she belongs. Individuals choose to compare their groups with other groups in ways that reflect positively on themselves. According to Tajfel (1978), as the self is defined in terms of the in-group, the individual is endowed with a sense of self-being, self-worth and self-esteem. The outcome of social comparison is called *status hierarchy* (Francis, 2005:24). A group perceived to be superior has high status and a group viewed as inferior has low status. An individual belonging to a group with high status would have a positive social identity and belonging to a low status group implies that the individual would have a negative identity. According to Hogg and Vaughan (2002), having a social identity gives members a sense of belonging and confidence in society. The possibility cannot be ruled out, however, that in a school context an exclusivistic religious 'in-' group (with high status) could become hegemonic with the possible consequence that individuals who do not belong to that religious 'in-' group could experience a negative identity.

Campbell (1992), in her critique, identifies certain limitations in SIT. She says that SIT fails to take account of the interaction between the individual and society and also fails to develop an account of identity formation and transformation with changing social conditions. She explains that, in keeping with this theory, the individual conducts his or her life in varying degrees of submission to a range of *socially structured self-categorisations* (Francis, 2005:28). Campbell's other criticism of SIT is that it reduces society to the notion of 'the group' without taking into account social hierarchy and unequal power relations based on social divisions of ethnicity, gender and class and religion. Jenkins (1996) lends support to this critique in his discussion of what he calls *institutional* identity, suggesting that specific organizations would have certain established norms of practice, activities and social classification, which would bestow particular social identities upon its members (Ramson,

2006). Francis (2005:17) contends that *social contexts can either enable or hinder the degree of agency that individuals have to construct identities*. Part of this study was to determine how the norms of practice, activities and social classification operating within the institution (the school) affects how teachers construct their social identity and give voice to their understanding of 'religious freedom'.

Hood (1998) contends that individuals may have a variety of identities or sub-identities, each supported by different group memberships, and that a sense of self or personal continuity occurs when individuals define themselves by the same labels used by the groups with which they identify. The difficulty arises for individuals who view themselves, or reject the view of themselves, concurrently as members of two social groups (Francis, 2005). This was a significant issue for this study as it raised questions as to how teachers who are members of a particular religion, especially if it is exclusive in nature, negotiate their social identities as South Africans in a multireligion context where the constitutional emphasis is on 'freedom of religion' and where the expectation is the adoption of an inclusive approach with regard to multireligion education.

Postmodernists like Harro (2000:15) posit that people are born into a particular set of social identities and that they are influenced by powerful socializing forces, all of which are predisposing to *the unequal roles in the dynamic system of oppression*. His theory of the *Cycle of Socialization* describes how socialisation begins from birth when individuals are shaped into particular identities by already existing structures such as history, traditions, beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes. Biesta (1998) contends that an individual is rooted in a past that was not written by him- or herself. In this study this is referred to as the teacher's 'biography'. Some people, he argues, are born into 'agent' groups (those with more social power) while others are born into 'target' groups that are subordinate and victimized by various types of prejudice such as that based on religion. Harro (2000:15) contends that powerful social, religious and cultural agents like schools and religious institutions influence an individual's sense of self. Postmodernists, referred to in this study, reject any idea of a core identity and rather describe identity as a product of discourse in given historical and political contexts and that identity is *fragmented, multiple and transient* (Bendle, 2002:5). The individual is considered to be produced in a whole range of discursive practices, not least social contexts like schools (Biesta, 1998:5).

### 2.2.2.2. 'Multiple identities' and 'identity negotiation'

Berger (in Giddens, 2000:83) refers to the *pluralisation of lifeworlds*. He suggests that modern social life is segmented and that segmentation includes the differentiation between the public and private domains. This could lead to discomfort as individuals move between these different domains in their daily lives. Giddens (2000:83) refers to these domains as *lifestyle sectors*. He regards individuals as having 'multiple identities' (ibid.) and which of these identities is appropriate for an individual at any one time would vary according to the social context. Each identity informs the individual of who he or she is and what this identity entails. This has pertinence when considering the 'multiple identities' with which teachers engage as they move in and out of a variety of social contexts, which would include family, classroom, religious community, and sports and social clubs. This multiplicity of identities also includes the different roles played by the individual teachers in each social context. In a particular school context a teacher may carry status and authority as a discipline or phase Head of Department, but in the home or family context he or she must adopt a more submissive, less authoritative role. In the mono-religious community the same teacher may have a leadership role in promoting that particular religion, and then in the classroom context the same individual is expected to put this particular 'identity' aside in the interests of promoting a multireligion teaching approach.

Jenkins (1996), considered to be a post-symbolic interactionist, basing his theories on those of Harter (1977) and others, proposes a model of *internal-external dialectic of identification*, contending that there is a definite self-conscious, decision-making aspect to human behaviour. He suggests that individuals consciously pursue goals and want to be seen in a particular manner so as to develop successful social identities. He advocates that individuals choose the identity they wish to embrace. Gover (undated:1) endorses this view and contends that this choice of identity takes place *as one move[s] actively between private and public, personal and cultural, past and present*. Ramson (2006:61) states that

*... the self is seen to determine the nature of its own identity through exerting conscious choices, not bound by fixed and culturally determined positions, but increasing autonomy and control.*

While the external context (in this case, the school) shapes, for example, choice of dress, behaviour and curriculum, this study sought to determine how the individual deconstructed this in relation to his or her more existential self.<sup>35</sup> Hoyle (undated) suggests that due to a variety of personal and interpersonal motives, the self on public display often does not match the self of which the individual is privately aware. He also postulates that culture itself has a profound effect, and moots the possibility that in cultures that value the collective (e.g. family/religious group) over the individual, there is no clearly delineated self. Hoyle (ibid.) suggests a public self that is influenced by different personal and social motives that may not be congruent with the self of whom the individual is personally conscious. He also speaks about certain aspects of the self that can only be inferred and may not be fully describable or observable.

Nias (1985, 1989) draws a distinction between what she calls the 'substantial' and the 'situational' self. In the case of a teacher this would refer to teacher identity formation in which the 'inner' or 'core' self would strive to realize its own purposes, while a more 'external' or 'professional' sense of self is constrained by circumstance in the school or classroom. Nias highlights the need for 'identity negotiation' (Wikipedia, 2007), the purpose of which is to develop a consistent set of behaviours reinforcing the identity of the person. Each identity would have to be negotiated separately by interaction with those affected by the role in question. Jansen (2001:242) contends that *policy images* of teachers make demands that conflict with their *personal identities* as practitioners. This *identity conflict* (ibid.) could contribute to the possible dilemma in implementing a multireligion discourse.

According to Samuel and Stephens (2000:478), teachers

*... walk a tightrope in both developing a personal teacher identity which sits comfortably with their own sense of self and maintaining a balance between satisfying the requirements of state and society and providing the source and impetus for change.*

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<sup>35</sup> Existential self here refers to the individual's experience, consciousness or sense of awareness of 'I am'; a reflective state or an intuitive feeling of being and existing, including religious identity (Ramson, 2006:62).

The researcher suggests that in the area of religion, 'identity negotiation' is a necessary process for teachers who identify with members of a particular religious group and who then, in satisfying 'the requirements of state' have to negotiate that identity within a multireligion school context. Research conducted by Carrim (2001), Soudien (2001) and Matheson and Harley (2001) (in Jansen, 2001) showed that there is often a disparity between teacher image (what is expected) and teacher identity. This could also possibly translate into a difference between what teachers claim they are doing in a multireligion classroom and what is actually taking place. More specifically this could point to a difference between talking about 'religious freedom' as a human right and actual classroom praxis reflecting a multireligion approach.

### **2.2.2.3. Power relations**

Foucault (1980) moves beyond Erikson's theory of identity and that of the social identity theorists, speaking as he does, of power relations. He argues that power is pre-eminent and the individual, and all that is identified as constructing individuality, are in reality the effects of power. He speaks of the individual as a *subjugated sovereignty* (Francis, 2005:32), an individual created by systems and networks of power and responsible for his or her own actions. According to Foucault (1980), the subject or self does not possess a unique, fixed identity but rather assumes different identities and functions within different discourses and relations of power. In Foucault's (1990) view, power exists in every social relation (for example, teacher/learner relationship in the classroom) and institution (for example, teacher/SMT relationship in the school). Power functions by observing and regulating behaviour. Foucault (ibid.) interprets power as 'disciplinary', as diffuse and invisible, and as regulating behaviour pervasively and silently. Such power could be repressive because it determines what is acceptable and what is not (Baez, 2000). Foucault (1980:198) posits that *power means relation, a more-or-less organized, hierarchical, co-coordinated cluster of relations* and he sees this power as the disciplining of individuals as they approach the everyday practices of their lives. This power is inherent in the way in which people think and reason about the world and the self.

According to Bhana (in Francis, 2005:34), power is *never stable but in flux*, it is *not possessed but exercised in ways that produce and reproduce inequalities in the interplay of shifting mobile relationships*. It is reasonable then to contend that social relationships are not fixed

but rather fluid. This agrees with Foucault's (1990) view that individual and social identities are *acquired, claimed and allocated, produced and reproduced within power relations*. Berkhout (2004) argues that thinking about power forms part of a particular way in which individuals view others. It develops and shapes individuals in historically embedded contexts that have important implications for future identity, especially with regard to their concept of freedom and responsibility.

In terms of SIT and the notion of power relations, social categories of ethnicity, religion, gender and class cannot be willed away. The question could then be asked as to how teachers create their identities. In South Africa, the historical and socio-political context of ethnicity, language, gender and religion has profoundly influenced how South Africans have shaped their identities. As was explained in the first chapter of this study, religion in South Africa was used to marginalize cultures. Christianity was the official religion of the state and the doctrine of the Dutch Reformed Church (as well as the other two Afrikaans Reformed Churches-author), especially, was regarded as superior to other Christian denominations and other religions (Chidester, 2002b). Part of the radical process of transformation which has taken place – and still is – in South Africa is the search for, and development of, a new national identity in which people are able to retain their ethnic and religious identities whilst at the same time striving for a common identity as South African citizens.

### **2.2.3. Religion and Identity**

Smart (1989) defines religion as comprising seven dimensions<sup>36</sup>, which although given different content and emphasis in various religions, can be discerned in any religious movement. He does not, however, refer to the spiritual powers and beings so real to believers. Scholars, including Durkheim (1858 – 1917) and Otto (1869 – 1937), did, however, define religion as *a set of varied perceptions of and responses to the sacred* (De Gruchy & Prozesky, 1991:8), 'the sacred' meaning that which is substantially significant and set apart or distinct from ordinary things. Religion could thus be defined as the belief in and worship of a supernatural being (or not, as in the case of Buddhism) which may or may not include

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<sup>36</sup> The seven dimensions are as follows: practical and ritual; experiential and emotional; narrative or mythic; doctrinal and philosophical; ethical and legal; social and institutional; and material.

structured rituals or processes, and which has the goal of creating *in the practitioner a mood of reverence, appreciation or devotion and a lifestyle of morality* (Ramson, 2006:75).

Religious experience operates within a field of believing where the belief affords the space for the experience. Azari and Birnbacher (2004:912) contend that belief functions as a *background condition guiding the way the believer interprets and evaluates his or her relation to the world* as well as to the 'being' to which this individual feels religiously related. According to Ramson, (2006:75)

*... [r]eligious identity is most effectively achieved when there is consistency between the collective identity and [the individual's] ego identity which underscores the research that intrapersonal (internal and unconscious) and interpersonal (product of social interaction) processes are at play in shaping identity.*

Individuals, and in the case of this study, teachers, would need to deconstruct 'collective identity' (in this case a particular religious belief system as conferred by, for example, a particular religious organization) and their 'individual identity' (own belief) to establish what could be regarded as consistency between the two. On the one hand, the individual exercises his or her freedom of choice, and on the other, the lack of institutionalization produces for the individual a crisis of identity. Research undertaken by Roux and Du Preez (2006:151) showed that in-service teachers in general felt *overwhelmed and disempowered* when having to facilitate lessons about belief systems and values which were not part of their cultural and/or religious and spiritual traditions. Christian teachers in state schools which formerly had a Christian only influence and ethos, for example, found themselves in such a place of crisis where Christianity was no longer the institutionalized religion.

### **2.2.3.1. Agency versus structure**

In this particular study, the agency<sup>37</sup> (free will) versus structure<sup>38</sup> (constraints) dichotomy drew attention to the construction of and resistance to 'religious freedom' in the school context

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<sup>37</sup> Agency can be defined as free will / self-determination / autonomy.

<sup>38</sup> Structure can be defined as institutional or social constraint.

(Baez, 2000). Individual agency<sup>39</sup> referring to individualization,<sup>40</sup> described the relationship of the individual to society. It is the process, according to Beck (in Adams, 2003), whereby individuals have to develop their own biography and organize it in relation to others. With regard to religious identity this would mean establishing a new biography that is embedded in a new mindset that embraces religious diversity. By contrast, what Beck (in Adams, 2003) calls structural determinism,<sup>41</sup> takes place when structures become instruments imposing the interests of a hegemonic group. Structures can be described as sets of rules and resources which individuals draw on and reproduce in social interaction (Beck, in Adams, 2003). CNE would be a typical example of structural determinism. Bourdieu<sup>42</sup> (1930-2002) contends that the school as *the productive locus of a particular habitué* could entrench patterns of thought which *organize reality by directing and organising thinking about reality* so that teachers adopt and reproduce particular structures (Berkhout, 2004:29). Roux (2005a:305) endorses this view, suggesting that

... [t]he school community's attitude towards multireligion education seems to have a direct influence on ... teaching perceptions and strategies of ... teachers in a multireligion education programme in schools.

According to Baez (2000), the 'agency' versus 'structure' debate aims at understanding the range of actions that is possible (agency) and the systemic limitation of those actions (structure). Individual forms of religious discrimination<sup>43</sup>, whether covert or overt, are premised on a view of human agency that assumes that individuals intentionally commit actions that discriminate against members of another religion because of prejudicial attitudes (ibid.). The focus of a theory of individual religious discrimination is based on 'agentic' actions of *the 'oppressor' and 'victim'* (Baez, 2000: 335). Institutional forms of religious discrimination could constrain the individual's ability to make free choices.

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<sup>39</sup> *I am what I choose to be* (Beck, in Adams, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> This is not to be confused with individualism which implies becoming an autonomous individual.

<sup>41</sup> *I am what I was determined to be* (Beck, in Adams, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> Bourdieu (1930 - 2002) was a prominent French sociologist who theorized on the role of education in the reproduction of inequalities in society.

<sup>43</sup> Baez (2000) bases his arguments in the realm of racism. For the purposes of this study this is translated into the domain of religious discrimination.

However, the definite distinction between agency and structure is problematic because it fails to sufficiently take into account the power interplay between the two; either individuals have power, or power is exerted by structures. Baez (2000) suggests that structures are human productions and resisting structures requires an understanding of the historical processes that led to their production. Any power that structures have to constrain human agency is not determined in advance by these structures. Structures are temporal in nature and have to be reinforced by individuals in order to reconsolidate their power and efficacy (Baez, 2000).

Baez (2000) contends that the focus should be on the sites of relations between individuals and between individuals and social institutions/structures (in this case, schools and policy). If applied in the context of this study, it follows that teachers could play a pivotal role in the classroom in either entrenching discrimination on the basis of religion or in promoting religious tolerance<sup>44</sup> and respect<sup>45</sup> for those who believe differently from oneself so as to dispel a *belief in the superiority of a particular [religion] leading to prejudice and antagonism toward people of other [religions]* (Baez, 2000:330). The difference between structure and agency focuses attention on schools as sites of possible religious discrimination and conflict and the tension that results in schools from the repetition of power and resistance to it. Baez (2000:339), supported by Giddens (2002) advocates that it is the individual agency that emerges from the margins of structural power that makes possible the disruption of, and redefinition of, (religiously) intolerant structures.

Scholars like Brittan and Maynard (1984) suggest that oppression results from the actions of human actors and so resistance and oppression are the result of agency. The concern with agency is important because in order to be held accountable for discriminating against someone else, one must first be able to exercise some 'free will' (agency). This notion of agency, however, is not unproblematic as it fails to sufficiently take into account the difficulties associated with the individual's ability to make choices in the face of oppressive structures (cf. Foucault, 1980; 1990).

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<sup>44</sup> Tolerance can be defined as the *liberty to uphold one's religious opinions and forms of worship or to enjoy all social privileges ... without regard to religious differences* (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1958).

<sup>45</sup> Respect can be described as an *interpersonal value that forms the foundations of all human interaction* (Beckmann & Nieuwenhuis, 2004:60).

Religion might be characterized as a *discursive field* which consists of *competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organizing social institutions and processes ... within a discursive field* [however], *not all discourses carry equal weight or power* (Baez, 2000:330). As was evident in previous discussion, an institutionalized or hegemonic religion could entrench a particular religious discourse. As a discursive field, religion contains many, often conflicting, types of discourse that seek to define and shape an individual's behaviour. The agency versus structure debate is crucial in the discursive field of religion. Foucault (1980) would say that given how discourse becomes 'practice', it is important to understand the way in which religion is 'put into discourse'.

If Banton's (1967) overview of the basic approaches to conceptualizing racial domination were to be applied to religious domination, it would emerge that religious ideology is used by the dominant religious group to justify its hegemony and the preferences that it receives. Religious prejudice can be described as an attitude directed towards people, groups and social institutions and cannot easily be eliminated because of its emotional character. Religious discrimination forms a measure of social distance (Baez, 2000:330).

According to Banton (1967), a distinction can be drawn between 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' religious discrimination. 'Extrinsic' discrimination, which is ideological, sees members of other religions as having or lacking certain virtues and this is considered to be morally sufficient for justifying differential treatment. 'Intrinsic' discrimination, which is attitudinal, considers the raw fact of different religious beliefs as sufficient moral ground for the differential treatment of other religious groups. Helms (1990:49) draws a distinction between 'institutional discrimination' which is *embedded in the system* and 'individual discrimination' which she describes as acting prejudiciously against those who represent the religious minority.

In applying Goffman's (1963) theorizing of symbolic interactionism in his study of stigmas, to religion, one could contend that religious stigmas are *generated in social situations during mixed contact by virtue of the unrealized norms that are likely to play on the encounter* (Baez, 2000:332). Put differently, an institution like a school could portray a particular norm (either positive or negative) with regard to an approach to 'religious freedom' but it is enforced by individuals in social institutions. Individuals are agents of their existence and as such could possibly resist an intrinsic negativity towards other religions or promote the same.

It was anticipated that this study would highlight institutional and/or individual, extrinsic and/or intrinsic discrimination based on religion. This study could also possibly uncover schools that support a hegemonic religion where a particular religious discourse characterises the school policy and regulations which may appear to be neutral and 'constitutional', but which often impact prejudiciously on minority religions. The findings of this study could well reflect that what is required is a reconsideration of institutional policies and practices.

What also needs to be taken into account is the degree to which individuals construct their own reality and the role played by their biography. Berkhout (2004:21) posits that an *understanding of the 'cause' of being* what an individual is (biography) and the possibility of change, are fundamentally linked to a view of power and power relations. According to Baez (2000:342 - 343), in resisting religious discrimination teachers should consider the following:

- Religion is agentic, or structural, and as such is *vulnerable* (Baez, 2000: 342). As a human product it must be repeated by individuals in order to remain effective.
- Teachers who have the tools (and social authority) should promote 'religious freedom' premised on social justice and human rights.
- Teachers should consider themselves as significant in promoting social justice.

Bourdieu (1930 - 2002) and Foucault (in Berkhout, 2004) postulate that knowledge needs to be deconstructed. The researcher would like to suggest that it would be helpful for teachers to deconstruct their understanding of 'religious freedom' because biography, social heritage, and instruments of power are contingent. Teachers need to think critically and reflectively about their own construct of knowledge with regard to 'religious freedom'. Berkhout (2004:21) suggests that in order to do so *they need to distance themselves from the conceptions held by everyone else and from the official representations thereof as embedded in institutions*. Teachers need to seriously consider what shaped their religious identity and the implications of this for a transformed education practice. Francis, Muthukrishna & Ramsuran (2006:140) suggest that

... [w]hen power circulates it determines to some extent possible ways of acting and limits of what can be done; but it is also a mechanism that enables one to act.

Teachers have the 'agentic' power to create new forms of behaviour and new ways of self-understanding and new codes of meaning with regard to religion. However, research by Ferguson and Roux (2003a, 2003b) has shown that practising teachers in South Africa find it difficult to trust the new curriculum and theories *and [they] still rely on a fundamentalist and confessional presentation and view of religion education* (Roux, 2007b:100, Chidester, 2002b: 4 - 6). According to Roux, Du Preez and Ferguson (2007), many teachers who come from mono-religious environments often display signs of fear or discomfort when placed in a multireligion environment. Roux (2005a) contends that there are teachers who teach from a mono-religious perspective. These teachers could be described as lacking in 'religious literacy'. Roux (2007b:4) describes having 'religious literacy' as *the ability to develop a self-identification (the self) and to communicate with understanding with or about world opinions (the other)*. It is important to have knowledge about different belief systems and teaching strategies, but this alone cannot facilitate an attitudinal change. The power lies in being able to make a paradigm shift from a mono- to a multireligion discourse and to give voice to this. In order for teachers to make this paradigm shift, the researcher advocates that it is necessary for teachers to have an understanding of human rights and more specifically the human right to 'religious freedom'.

## 2.3. KEY CONCEPTS

### 2.3.1. 'Religious freedom'

In this section 'religious freedom' is firstly defined as a human right, and then various approaches to addressing 'religious freedom' in a school context of religious diversity are presented.

#### 2.3.1.1. Human right

The South African state itself is not religious, but it favours religion to the extent that it guarantees the free expression thereof as a specific constitutional right. According to Fourie

(2003:104), the way in which the relationship between state and religion is defined in South Africa follows a *secular-individualistic hermeneutic framework*. This means that all religious discourse should be barred from the political and public sphere. The phrases in the National Anthem that refer to God would thus be classified as *insignificant ceremonial deism* (Venter, 2005:8).

The arrangements regarding 'religious freedom' in the CRSA (1996) have much in common with some foundational elements of the German 'Staatskirchenrecht'. Established principles of German law are freedom of religion, no official state religion or the privileging of any religious confession, and the equality of all religions (Venter, 2005:17).

With regard to religion within the CRSA (1996), Dickinson and Van Vollenhoven (2002:12) suggest the following:

*The fact that religion is one of the specifically named rights in Section 9 emphasizes the vertical and horizontal nature of the right to freedom of religion. In other words, every individual legally has the right to freedom of religion and must also respect the right to freedom of religion of others. Secondly, the right to freedom of religion also places a responsibility on the state to provide positive circumstances for the exercise of religious freedom.*

Section 9 (3) of the Bill of Rights (CRSA, 1996) says that the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on amongst others, the grounds of religion or belief. Section 15(1) (ibid.) clearly states that *everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion*. This should be read together with Section 31 (ibid.):

*Cultural, religious and linguistic communities:*

- (1) *Persons belonging to a ... religious ... community may not be denied the right ... with other members of the community –*
  - (a) *to ... practise their religion ... and*
  - (b) *to form, join and maintain ... religious ... associations.*

Fourie (2003) points out that a leading Canadian court definition has become a general definition standard for 'religious freedom' (it was also used in the first 'religious freedom' case heard in SA in 1997). It is the right

*... to entertain such religious beliefs as a person chooses, the right to declare religious beliefs openly and without fear of hindrance or reprisal, and the right to manifest belief by worship and practice or by teaching and dissemination* (Fourie, 2003:101).

Section 7 of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, is consistent with Section 15(2) (ibid.) which *provides that religious observances may be conducted (at schools for example) provided that such observances ... are conducted on an equitable basis and participation is free and voluntary*. This section places a responsibility on the state to interfere in religious matters in order to create conditions for the exercise of 'religious freedom' without favouring a particular religion. Rules issued by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) must be consistent with Section 9 of the CRSA (1996).

With regard to 'religious freedom' in education and thus also the 'religious freedom' of children, the South African state is bound by its Bill of Rights in the CRSA (1996) and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, which the General Assembly of the United Nations accepted in November 1989 and which South Africa ratified on 16 June 1995 (Horn, 2006).

Hammer (2001:256) explains that the right to freedom of belief can be classified as the freedom to adhere to a belief (freedom *to*) or the resistance to influences to either adopt or change a belief (freedom *from*). According to Horn (2006:29):

*[A] point of contention for some in South African education is the fact that state ideology is seeking to revive and reinstate traditional African beliefs and to give a place of honour to other non-Christian religions. This aim is understandable and in response to the alienation experienced by people of different [religions] during the years of colonial and apartheid rule.*

Hence the compulsory RE component within LO which, according to the Minister of Education, Pandor (2005), would

*... enable our children to engage with religion, as a rich heritage, as a source of moral reflection and as a resource for spiritual formation; in ways that are consistent with the educational aims and objectives of our modern school curriculum.*

However, *in RE there are personal, religious and spiritual dimensions that considerably complicate the process of transformation and the inclusion of different religions in the curriculum and praxis* (cf. Roux, 2007b:6).

### **2.3.1.2. Approaches to teaching in a context of religious diversity**

In countries where there was an increase in religious plurality, teaching religious education with a confessional approach<sup>46</sup> became increasingly uncomfortable. In countries like England, Jackson and others engaged in research in this area (for example the Lancaster Schools Council Project in 1971) ; in the Netherlands Van der Leeuw (1890 - 1950) engaged in similar research, and in Australia, Moore and Habel (1980s, 1990s) were largely responsible for research studies in that context. Tragic events within Britain and internationally<sup>47</sup> focused the need to give more attention to the *religious dimension of social life in education programmes* (cf. Jackson, 2004).

Smart (in Jackson, 1997:2) criticized confessional approaches as inappropriate in a *predominately secular and increasingly religiously pluralistic democracy*. He advocated a

*... non-dogmatic, phenomenological approach in which teacher and learner alike were encouraged to 'bracket out' their presuppositions in order to attempt empathetically to grasp religion from the insider's perspective<sup>48</sup>.*

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<sup>46</sup> Transmission of religious culture from one generation to the next within religious traditions.

<sup>47</sup> Such as riots in Oldham, Burnley, Leeds and Bradford, England (1995, 2001), USA (September 11 2001), Bali (2002), Casablanca and Jakarta (2003).

<sup>48</sup> From the perspective of the individual adhering to a particular religion.

In employing this phenomenological approach in schools in England, Jackson (1997) distinguishes between 'religious instruction'<sup>49</sup> and 'religious education'.<sup>50</sup> He posits that it was

*... the function of the school (as distinct from home and community) to assist pupils to understand the nature of religion and to know something of the diversity of belief systems, their significance for individuals and how these bear on the community (Jackson, 1997:9).*

Cox, Burn and Hart (in Jackson, 1997:10) express the concern that this approach could lead to the superficial treatment or *trivialization* of religions. According to Dickinson and Van Vollenhoven (2002:9), any comparative study of religions could involve *making a judgment about the values underpinning the religions* and such a course could be somewhat of an *instructional minefield* for teachers. Any juxtapositioning of religions could also lead to confusion. Krüger (in Roux, 2007b:10) posits that if the relativity of truths is not acknowledged then religions could only be studied in terms of a specific cultural context. He would support an approach that promotes the equitable treatment of all religions, saying that *there is no reason to deny the structural similarities and the pan-religious commonalities such as ritual, ideas of good and evil, myth, and so on* (Krüger in Du Toit & Krüger, 1998:48). Horn (2006), concerned with issues of truth and morality, rejects any form of even implicit relativism and contends that the question of *religious truth* is being ignored when learners are taught that all religions are equally worthy. She says that children should be taught *not to regard the various religions as of equal worth, but (rather) true tolerance which means that one should respect the right of others to have a different religion from one's own* (Horn, 2006:30).

The University of Warwick in England developed the *interpretive approach* to multireligion education (cf. Jackson, 1997, Chapter 5) which *recognizes the inner diversity, fuzzy edgedness and contested nature of religious traditions as well as the complexity of cultural expression and change from social and individual perspectives* (Jackson, 2004:8). This approach emphasizes the importance of seeing meaning as it is tied to context. It also raises

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<sup>49</sup> Confessional approach.

<sup>50</sup> In South Africa the equivalent is 'RE' (cf. 1.2).

the issue of reflexivity, that of the individual being aware of him- or herself and personal and social understanding in interpreting *the testimony of someone from another way of life* (Jackson, 1997:30). This would include an empathetic approach, or a commitment to working at understanding each individual from his or her point of view together with the feelings surrounding it, and at understanding individuals in and through the context of their lives (Abdool & Drinkwater, 2005:367).

According to Chidester (2002a:18)

*... the study of religion ... especially in public schools, has to come to terms with citizenship. Whether created nationally or transnationally, citizenship is inevitably a matter of identity ... space needs to be created for teaching and learning about religion in ways that recognize, affirm and explore, creatively and critically, this multiplicity of identity.*

Lincoln (1987:74) argues that the study of religion is *constantly confronted with the challenge of making sense of the discourses ... through which ... any 'us' is constructed*. He advocates that teaching and learning about religion must respond to the *multiplicity of personal and collective identity*. He adds that the classroom could be a space for inclusive citizenship in which no one is defined as 'the other' on the basis of religion.

A postmodern approach, according to Melchert (1995), would be for an individual to foster an understanding of his/her own religious tradition without denying other traditions. This approach, while honouring communal tradition, also allows for the individual to engage in a critical reflection about his/her own traditions.

The researcher concurs with Roux (2007b:11) who suggests that a *reflective-dialogical approach with phenomenological notions, towards gaining knowledge on religions other than their own*, be encouraged as the point of departure for RE. A phenomenological approach allows the teacher to put his/her own beliefs *into parenthesis so that they become suspended, without ... having to become unfaithful to them* (Jackson, 1997:13 – 14). Intrareligious and interreligious dialogue should be encouraged. Intrareligious dialogue needs to take place to allow for critical inquiry and interaction between groups/denominations

of the same religion. Interreligious dialogue helps to broaden knowledge about different religions, when individuals of different religious traditions are in contact with one another within the same context. These dialogical approaches require an element of reflectivity as individuals investigate their own religions while also developing a religious literacy (cf. 2.3.2.3.) that will enable them to adapt to a context of religious diversity. Roux (2006) contends that a multireligion approach to RE is best reflected by the above phenomenological-reflective-dialogical approach so that various aspects and issues of religions are brought into a mode of critical dialogue.

Cox (in Jackson, 1997) contends that religious education should be part of a wider 'values education' and says that all values and value systems are based on beliefs (both secular and religious) about the nature of reality and of human nature. A way in which to facilitate multireligion education would be to adopt a Human Rights Values (HRV)<sup>51</sup> approach (first identified and described by Du Preez, 2005) which focuses on universal values as opposed to looking at 'difference' between religions as the point of departure. The *Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy* (2001) supports the South African National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2002; 2003). This document provides teachers with an understanding of the collective HRV underpinning the CRSA (1996). The Ministry of Education envisages that all teaching and learning will be rooted in the Manifesto's HRV.<sup>52</sup> HRV include respect for religions and social distinctions (Roux, Du Preez, Ferguson, 2007). HRV have the potential to support both individual and social context value structures. HRV could include the concept of identity and identity formation (ibid.) which is particularly relevant in this study which looks at teachers' religious identity and how it impacts on their voice in a context of religious diversity. Not all authors are in support of HRV. Beckmann and Nieuwenhuis (2004:59) argue that rights are not viewed equally in all communities and hence hold no credence. They say, for example, that the right to 'religious freedom' may be valued highly in some communities and less so, if at all, in others and so the values underpinning these human rights could also have a different significance attached to them in different communities. The conclusion Swanepoel (2001) drew from a research project undertaken to establish the attitudes of the peoples of South Africa, especially the youth, towards religious and human

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<sup>51</sup> HRV underpin human rights as found in the CRSA Bill of Rights (1996). HRV are the vehicle providing a common denominator for facilitating the understanding of human rights, including that of 'religious freedom'.

<sup>52</sup> These HRV values are democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, human dignity, open society, accountability/responsibility, rule of law, respect and reconciliation (DoE, 2001).

rights values was that generally, a [multireligion] *orientation correlates positively and a monoreligious orientation negatively with human rights attitudes* (Swanepoel, 2001:118).

According to Roux, Du Preez and Ferguson (2007), HRV which underpin the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as maintained in the South African Bill of Rights (1996) are effective in facilitating an understanding of religious diversity in RE as part of LO. Findings of the SANPAD project (2005 – 2007) showed (amongst other findings) that pre-service teachers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) who participated in the research project thought that second to education, ‘religious freedom’ was an important human right. Respondents tended to express their reasons for this from a personal perspective saying that *to be able to practise [their] religion freely is important* and that *everyone should be able to follow his/her religion* (Roux, Smith, Ferguson, Small, Du Preez & Jarvis, SANPAD Research Report, 2006). The participating UKZN pre-service teachers, who had completed a module in human rights and religious diversity, agreed that HRV could be useful in facilitating RE. According to Roux, Du Preez & Ferguson (2007:15) *a moral understanding of HRV could assist in the development of religious literacy*. This approach could facilitate tolerance, respect and understanding of other religions. It would be interesting to compare the understanding of ‘religious freedom’ of selected teachers in KZN schools with that of the UKZN pre-service teachers in the SANPAD research project and to record how the in-service teachers voice their religious discourse.

A discourse approach in a context of religious diversity provides individuals with a framework for developing a conceptual understanding of the complexities of human rights issues like ‘religious freedom’. Nothling (2001) states that, because no discourse is neutral it provides a way to open up possibilities for more than one perspective. Baumann (1996) distinguishes between ‘dominant discourse’ which concretises views of religions and ‘demotic discourse’ which describes the language of interaction with others at the personal level (cf. 2.3.2.1.). A discourse approach facilitates an interpretive framework for the analysis and understanding of individual experiences. ‘Demotic discourse’ affords the opportunity for the individual voice to be heard despite dominant discourses.

### 2.3.2. Voice

In the apartheid era voices suggesting any form of multireligion education in line with the human right to 'religious freedom' were silenced, since they challenged the Christian-National ideology (1.2.). After 1996, previously silent voices have been articulated, resulting in the emergence of new social discourses.

In relation to Foucault's work, Deetz (1998:159) says that voice

*... can be considered as an attempt to open discussion about issues that apparently need no discussion and to act 'on' rather than simply 'in' present institutional arrangements. Voice, thus is the presence of active resistance to constant processes ... Voices reclaim that which was marginalized, putting it back into competitive relation with the dominant interests.*

#### 2.3.2.1. Dialogical voice

In Allen's (2004) view, there needs to be clarity regarding hearing and listening to teacher's voices. In his attempt to clarify the role of the teacher's voice in an American context of what he calls 'school renewal'<sup>53</sup>, he identifies basic types of voices. Included is what he calls *dialogical voice* (Allen, 2004:320)<sup>54</sup>. Allen (2004:319) posits that teachers need a forum, or to use his word, an *audience*, that would respectfully *listen* to what they are saying. This would take place when teachers publicly express their opinions and consider the ideas of others. It provides an opportunity to get to know not only the 'other'<sup>55</sup> better, but also oneself. Iprgrave's (2002) research in Leicester, England, led to the development of a threefold approach to dialogue. She suggests that primary dialogue includes the acceptance of diversity, difference and change. Secondary dialogue involves being open to difference, willing to engage with difference and ready to learn from others. The tertiary aspect includes

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<sup>53</sup> An attempt to better educate students.

<sup>54</sup> 'Dialogical' does not refer to communication and conversation per se, but rather to searching for meaning and understanding.

<sup>55</sup> The 'other', as in other people, as opposed to oneself.

the actual verbal interchange (Ipgrave, 2001)<sup>56</sup>. Allen (2004:320) suggests that part of this dialogical engagement with others would be reflecting upon and acting on what emerges from this engagement. He suggests that *this type of participation has transformational powers* (ibid.). Ling (2003) endorses this practical aspect to voice saying that human voices that exercise the choice to act or not to act do indeed make a difference to the contexts within which they exist.

The intention of this study was to identify and interrogate selected teachers' voices in the context of religious diversity. In order to 'hear' these voices, the researcher had to consider teachers' biographical discourses and school context. Samuel and Stephens (2000:488) suggest that *identity baggage* influences *the transition from personal self to professional identity*. They postulate that *inertial forces*, emanating from teachers' biographical discourses and *contextual forces* deriving from the *macro-educational environment of changing policy ... and the micro-educational environment of a changing school culture* (ibid.) play a substantial role in the formation of teacher identity.

Nothling (2001:158) posits that the concept of discourse provides teachers with the following: an interpretive framework for the analysis and understanding of their own biography with regard to religion; an ability to identify practices which influence their beliefs; the possibility of constructing a social identity; and *the chance to achieve an individual voice, despite the strengths and endurance of other dominant discourses* (ibid.). In effect this would mean interrogating issues such as possibly feeling threatened by a new multireligion school context, possibly trying to maintain a mono-religious approach in a multireligion environment, possibly managing the complexity and perhaps conflict between a personal 'inner' religious identity and that of a professional identity.

### 2.3.2.2. 'Paradigm shift'

Roux (1998:84) contends that *a preceding paradigm shift by ... teachers and school communities is needed to counter wrong perceptions, arguments and decision-making in teaching religion in multi-cultural schools*. She says that it is unhelpful to look at the future

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<sup>56</sup> The findings of research conducted by Weisse (1996) can also be considered (Jackson, 2003).

through the lenses of old paradigms and doing so could lead to what she calls *paradigm paralysis* (ibid.). Roux acknowledges that replacing a well worn, comfortable paradigm could lead to *paradigm paradox* (ibid.), or to conflict that could occur within the individual teacher or that could be directed towards others or an institution. What is needed to embrace a new dispensation and the opportunities that accompany it is *paradigm flexibility* (ibid.). Both the Norms and Standards policy (1998) and the Revised School Curriculum Statement (2002) assume that teachers are able to make the necessary paradigm shift, and have indeed made it. This assumption is not necessarily correct. The researcher's ongoing experience in the schools during periods of professional practice suggests that many teachers have not, in fact, made the necessary adjustments (1.3.).

In order for any *paradigm flexibility* (ibid.) to occur, it is important for teachers to look at their *personal history* (biography) as a *very natural aspect of the construction of a social identity*, and for their life experiences to be interwoven with social processes. This would necessitate, according to Nothling (2001:153), the narrative, which he defines as *the authentic accounts of real life experiences*. The researcher anticipated that by looking into selected teachers' narratives with regard to religion she would detect a glimpse of their 'religious' social identity and their conceptual understanding of 'religious freedom'. A narrative of the past could help to identify possible tensions, distrust or suspicion with regard to the present reality on the part of teachers who were members either of the formerly subjugated religious minorities or of the formerly hegemonic religion.

MacIntyre and Dunne (2002:9) suggest the use of *narrative unity* for getting to know what educational transformation means. *Narrative unity* will take place when teachers listen to one another's stories and use their voice to shape a discourse about the issues surrounding the new curriculum, and in particular, for the purposes of this study, education in a multireligion school context (cf. 2.3.2.1.). Narrative also encompasses the notion of *tradition* (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002:11). MacIntyre and Dunne (ibid.) stress that for any transformation to take place, South African teachers need to understand their (religious) *tradition*, but that equally, the (religious) *tradition* of others should also be empathetically investigated in an attempt to overcome prejudice, which they define as an enemy of education (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002:18). The CRSA Bill of Rights (1996) encourages the paradigm shift from a hegemonic (religious) tradition to one of getting to know what other

(religious) communities stand for. *Narrative* and *tradition* could facilitate this process, and also inform *practice* (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002: 5). Informed *practice* would entail a shift from a focus on the 'self' to a focus on the outcome for the 'self' and the 'common good'.

### 2.3.2.3. Religious literacy

According to Samuel and Stephens (2000:490 – 491), a criticism of the approach taken in this research project could be that it could be *very difficult to draw generalisations and broader lessons for policymakers from ... individual life experiences*. The refutation could be made, however, that an *authentic sense of perspective in an era of global change and policy directives* is lost if the experiences of teachers who *juggle professional and personal demands and dreams* are not sufficiently taken into account. *What (the teachers) carry with them into the classroom determines the educational experience of future generations* (ibid.).

Roux (2007b:4) states that teachers who are religiously literate would be able to demonstrate the ability to *self-identify* (his/her own religious identity) and communicate *with understanding with or about* other religions. Teachers who are religiously literate could convey this literacy to the school and broader community and facilitate learners' *assimilating their religious praxis and opinions, and surround their own life philosophy with the social context of the other* (ibid.). Classroom praxis could be directly influenced by a teacher's interpretation of 'religious freedom'. This study was therefore important in establishing how teachers construct their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' and the voice they use to express this understanding.

## 2.4. CONCLUSION

While they are not the only theorists who have written on identity, in this study the researcher drew on Erikson (to a lesser extent), Social Identity theorists and Foucault in order to facilitate a dialogue between the theory and the emerging data. These theories served as the theoretical framework that informed this study. They were relevant to a study which sought to investigate how the biography of a selected group of teachers, which forms the core of their social identity (Giddens, 2002; Popkewitz, 1997) and their social context influenced their understanding of 'religious freedom'.

How the selected teachers in this study identified themselves in terms of religious categories, and compared and contrasted themselves with other religious groupings, could well have provided them with a sense of confidence and 'belonging'. This, in turn, could have influenced their understanding of 'religious freedom'. Changing social conditions, such as changing school demographics and new curriculum policies and the possible pressure of 'institutional identity' (Jenkins, 1996), also needed to be considered in the shaping of teacher identity and the voice used in any discourse relating to 'religious freedom'.

Nias (1985, 1989), in distinguishing between the 'substantial' and 'situational' self, draws attention to what Giddens (2002) describes as 'multiple identities'. Teachers in a multireligion context could possibly find themselves having to negotiate identities (cf. Nias, in Wikipedia, 2007), in an attempt to develop a consistent set of behaviours so that the voice of the teacher does not reflect an 'identity conflict' (Jansen, 2001).

Foucault's (1980) theory of power relations and the 'agency' versus 'structure' debate were discussed with reference to teachers' 'religious identity'. Francis (2006) suggests that power could be constraining, but that it could also serve as a mechanism that teachers could use to bring about change. Depending on their understanding of 'religious freedom', teachers could either entrench religious discrimination or promote religious tolerance (Baez, 2000). Teachers need to consider what shaped their religious identity by considering their biography, the school context in which they find themselves, and the implications for their classroom praxis<sup>57</sup>.

The concept of 'religious freedom' was interrogated in Section 2.3.1.1. and identified as a human right in terms of the CRSA Bill of Rights (1996), especially Sections 15(1) and 9(3). The right to 'religious freedom' is also embedded in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. Internationally, and in South Africa (Religion and Education Policy, 2003), there has been a move away from mono-religious education to multireligion education. In reviewing the literature, the researcher mentioned various approaches to a multireligion school environment and in particular to RE. These approaches included the following: the phenomenological

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<sup>57</sup>This constitutes practical action. It is about taking action and reflecting upon the action in order to inform new action (Roux & Du Preez, 2006).

approach (Smart in Jackson, 1997); the interpretive approach (Jackson, 1997; 2004); values education (Cox in Jackson, 1997); a discourse approach (Nothling, 2001); and the 'reflective-dialogical' approach with phenomenological notions (Roux, 2007b). The DoE and Religion and Education Policy document (2003) advocate that all teaching and learning about religion should be rooted in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001). An HRV discourse, focusing on universal values as a point of departure, could be used to facilitate an understanding of 'religious freedom'. By adopting an HRV discourse the teacher would be able to unpack his/her own discourse and look at it from another perspective.

It was important to establish what teachers understood by the human right to 'religious freedom' before expecting them to make the shift from a mono-religious discourse (possibly shaped by their biography as well as the school context) to a multireligion approach. To facilitate this probable paradigm shift (cf. Roux, 1998) it would be helpful for teachers to engage in dialogue (cf. Allen, 2004) and more specifically 'narrative unity' (which includes tradition and practice) (cf. MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002) where they could listen to one another's stories and use their voice to shape a religious discourse which could lead to the implementation of a multireligion approach to education.

In reviewing the literature on a multireligion approach to education, the following research was included: approaches to multireligion education (mentioned above); teaching strategies that could be used in the classroom, such as colour coding (Roux, 2003) and playing games (Roux, 2003); the responses to the Policy on Religion and Education (2003) (Roux, 2005; Louw, 2005a; Coertzen, 2002; Chidester, 2002b; Jackson, 2005); understanding human rights through interreligious and intercultural dialogue (Roux, Smith, Ferguson, Small, Du Preez & Jarvis, SANPAD research report, 2006); mediation strategies with pre-service teachers (Ferguson & Roux, 2003a); and the need for teachers to make a paradigm shift from a mono-religious to a multireligion approach to facilitating RE (Roux, 1998). While the studies cited provided valuable information in the areas mentioned, none grappled sufficiently, or at all, with teachers' understanding of 'religious freedom' as a human right.

The researcher concluded that this study was significant in that it explored how in-service teachers constructed their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'. The researcher examined the possible influence of teachers' biography and school context on

how they voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'. It would be reasonable to suggest that when teachers have an understanding of 'religious freedom', as intended in the CRSA (1996), they should be able to adopt a multireligion approach in a context of religious diversity, and contribute to educational transformation.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, provides a detailed account of the research design and processes and methods inherent to the research question posed in Chapter 1 (1.5.). This account also forms the premises for the presentation and analysis of data to be discussed in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGIES and PROCESSES

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

Mouton (1996:17) describes four types of scientific inquiry, namely the epistemic model (or the search for truth); the sociological model (which describes research as a problem-solving social activity); the economic model (where research focuses on the production of knowledge) and the management model (where research concentrates on project management). Research in education manifests itself as a social process (sociological model). Babbie and Mouton (2001:xxi) describe social research as *the systematic observation of social life for the purposes of finding and understanding patterns in what is observed*. The role of social science is not only to uncover structures and relations, but also to use information gathered to inform further action (Porter, 2002:63). This study aimed at ascertaining how teachers constructed their understanding of 'religious freedom' and how their biography and context possibly influenced this understanding. It can therefore be described as a *problem-solving social activity* (sociological model) (Mouton, 1996:41).

According to Mouton (2001), research is essentially theoretical, empirical or applied. An empirical means to research was applied in addressing the research question in this study. In this chapter the empirical nature of the research design, and the methodologies and processes applicable, are discussed in detail.

The terms 'methods' and 'methodology' need clarification. The term 'methods' refers to the variety of techniques and procedures used in educational research in order to gather data which is to be used for inference and interpretation (Cohen & Manion, 1994:38 – 39). Methodologies have the purpose of describing and analysing methods so as to clarify their presuppositions, limitations and consequences (Cohen & Manion, 1994:39). A method can be viewed to some extent as a means of providing an artifact of scientific enquiry; while methodology is mainly concerned with comprehending the research processes underlying specific methods (cf. Cohen & Manion, 1994:39).

The methods of sampling, data collection and analysis of the research are determined by the choice between quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A quantitative methodology does not adequately explore all the *variables embedded in perceptions underlying certain attitudes [and understandings - author] in religion and belief systems* (Roux & Du Preez, 2005:279). *Qualitative* research, by contrast, can *provide important insights into different perceptions of reality* (McKie in Roux & Du Preez, 2005:279). Qualitative research can also comprise an encounter with the world and the ways in which teachers construct, interpret and give meaning to their experiences (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:199).

Various research theories and practices have emerged through various traditions. The modern traditions can be divided into three grand theories, or paradigms, namely the empirical-analytical tradition (positivism), the interpretive tradition and the critical tradition (ibid.). In this study the interpretive tradition was used (Denzin, 1989).

In the remainder of this chapter the following aspects relating to the research study are discussed:

- Research design (3.2.)
- Qualitative methods and processes that are employed ( 3.3.), namely:
  - literature review
  - selection of the target group
  - piloting of the study
  - survey research, including self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews
  - triangulation of the data gathered
- Ethical considerations (3.4.)

### 3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2001:55) states that *a research design is a plan or blueprint of how research was intended to be conducted and it involves asking: What kind of study will best answer one's formulated research question?* LeCompte and Preissle (1993:30) maintain that *a distinguishing characteristic of qualitative and ethnographic research design is that it facilitates a fluid and developmental process of investigation.*

The research question (1.5.): *How do teachers in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools construct their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?* would seem to be adequately addressed by means of the proposed research design (1.6.1.): The research to be undertaken will be empirical and qualitative in nature with elements of small-scale ethnography. The reasons why this design appeared to provide an adequate outline for addressing the research question becomes evident in a discussion on the various elements of the research design. The elements, namely empirical research and qualitative design, are subsequently considered.

### **3.2.1. Empirical research**

The term 'empirical' is often incorrectly understood as referring to research that has some connection with numbers and/or the manipulation of variables (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:31). Empirical research is therefore frequently regarded as research that entails quantitative methodology only. However, empirical studies could draw on both qualitative methodology (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:31) and quantitative methodology (Mouton, 1996:93). Empirical studies could include ethnographic designs, participatory research, surveys, experiments, field experiments, comparative studies and evaluation research (Mouton, 2001:144). Non-empirical studies usually consist of building theories and models, and conducting conceptual studies, as well as philosophical analyses (ibid.).

In this study empirical research was conducted since *it refers to whether or not phenomena are capable of being found in the real world and assessed by means of the senses* (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:31). Empirical research provides a sufficient departure point for qualitative and small-scale ethnographic research since it is *pre-eminently concerned with observation and recording of real-world phenomena* (ibid.).

### **3.2.2. Qualitative methodology**

According to Wellington (2000:18), quantitative research could be objective, value-free and neutral. This approach to research could eliminate respondents' and researcher's own *socio-*

*cultural backgrounds, religiosity,<sup>58</sup> religiousness<sup>59</sup> and spirituality* (Roux & Du Preez, 2005:279) and would therefore not be an appropriate methodology for a study such as this.

Gerson and Horowitz (2002:199) posit that *qualitative research always involves some kind of direct encounter with the world; whether it takes the form of ongoing daily life or interactions with a selected group*. It is concerned *with the ways that people construct, interpret and give meaning to events or experiences in their lives* (ibid.). Qualitative research is *multiparadigmatic in focus* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:9). Hence, qualitative researchers are sensitive to the value of a multi-method approach and committed to an interpretive understanding of human experience.

Qualitative research adopts an inductive approach, beginning with an immersion in the natural setting, describing events, actions and processes in context as accurately as possible. Thus the qualitative researcher is interested in what Geertz (1973) calls *thick description*. This takes place when the researcher collects sufficiently detailed descriptions of data in context and reports this with sufficient detail and precision to allow judgments about transferability to be made by the reader (ibid.). Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) describe qualitative research as a *generic research approach in social research that takes as its departure point the insider perspective on social action*. It should be viewed as a process that takes place in a natural setting. Its main aim is to provide *in-depth descriptions and understandings of actions and events* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270).

In order to provide consistent descriptions and understandings, it was necessary for the researcher to accept certain roles such as that of *insider* or *outsider* or *insider/outsider* (McCutcheon, 1999). According to Roux and Du Preez (2005:281), this role needs to be explicitly stated and defined because the position of the researcher could influence the outcome of the analysis of the research data (cf. McCutcheon, 1999).

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<sup>58</sup> *Religiosity* manifests itself in the way a person conducts a religion and/or belief system in a personal, religious, spiritual, economic, political and social construct of society and different world-views (Roux & Du Preez, 2005:275).

<sup>59</sup> *Religiousness* is a conscience dependency on a deity/God and the transcendent. It is more evident in an individual's commitment, personality, experiences, beliefs and thinking in devotional practice, morality and other social activities (Roux & Du Preez, 2005:275).

Objectivity is understood in at least two different ways in the qualitative paradigm. Either the researcher is seen as observer and interpreter, who is unbiased in descriptions and interpretations (outsider), or as insider, who needs to get close to the subjects and gain their trust and establish rapport. Babbie and Mouton (2001:271) claim that qualitative researchers should consciously attempt to *put themselves in the shoes of the people they are observing and studying and try and understand their actions, decisions, behaviour, practices, rituals and so on*. This view is referred to as the *insider* or *emic* perspective (McCutcheon, 1999). Bogdan and Taylor (1975:13 - 14) relate an insider perspective to the phenomenological roots of qualitative research:

*The phenomenologist views human behaviour as a product of how people interpret their world. The task of the phenomenologist ... [and] the qualitative methodologists, is to capture this process of interpretation. In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view.*

In this study the researcher adopted the position of insider and outsider. The researcher intended to build a rapport with the respondents in an attempt to view the world from their perspective (insider), while also recording unbiased observations and interpretations of survey responses (outsider).

Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) maintain that qualitative research needs to be reliable, credible and then transferable. In order to ensure this, it is important that extensive field notes are taken and that data be triangulated. In interviews respondents should be able to speak freely without any distortion of what they said. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:278), *an inquiry must also provide its audience with evidence that if it were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents in a similar context, its findings would be similar*.

In order to confirm the degree to which the findings were the product of the research and not the possible bias of the researcher it is recommended that the researcher leaves a *confirmability audit trail ... to enable the auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to their sources* (Babbie & Mouton,

2001:278). This trail includes evidence of the raw data (digitally recorded interviews, field notes and survey responses), data reduction and analysis (summaries, working hypotheses, concepts and hunches), and data reconstruction and synthesis (themes that developed, findings and conclusions).

### 3.2.3. Ethnography

*Ethnography*, according to LeCompte and Preissle (1993:1), derives its meaning from *ethnos*, which refers to a group of people or a cultural group, and *graphia*, which means writing. Ethnography could thus be described as *writing about people*. It could also mean *learning about people* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:279). Denzin (1989:141) defines ethnography simply as *the study of lived experiences, involving description and interpretation*.

Ethnography, as reconstructions of intact scenes or groups, simultaneously refers to a *product and a process* (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:2). The product emerges when ethnographic reports are read and envisions the same scene as that which a researcher experienced during his/her research (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:3).

Mouton (2001:148) describes ethnographic research as ... *studies that are usually qualitative in nature, which aim to promote an in-depth description of a group of people or community ... (producing) insider-perspectives of the actors and their practices*. This study employed an element of small-scale phenomenological ethnography viewed against an interpretive background. This type of ethnography is suited to the primary concern of understanding the social actors, in this case, the teachers, in a context of religious diversity. According to Roux and Du Preez (2005:276), empirical research projects in the area of Religion in Education (and this study falls into that research domain) seem to be more appropriate when supported by interpretive ethnographic designs because of the exploration of people's understandings, beliefs, attitudes and prejudices. This study employs an element of small-scale ethnography using case study as a research strategy.

#### 3.2.3.1. Case study

Babbie and Mouton (2001:281) describe a case study as *an intensive investigation of a single unit within its context*. They also posit that *[t]hickly described case studies take multiple*

*perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours (ibid.).* A case study, according to Basit (2003:143), examines a single instance *to illuminate the wider population to which it belongs.* This research employed a 'social group' case study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:281) which translated into a study of three small direct contact groups.

Case study research is inseparable from, and affected by, factors in the context in which it is embedded. Therefore, to understand and interpret case studies, researchers need to describe the context in detail. It is important to identify contextual variables that could influence the unit of analysis. Researchers need to provide enough information about subjects, setting and data collection and analysis to permit readers to make judgments about the adequacy of the method and to permit replication (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:282).

According to Anderson (1999:159), the strongest argument in favour of the case study *is that it incorporates a chain-of-evidence ... so that the reader who was not present to observe the case can follow the analysis and come to the stated conclusion.*

### 3.3. QUALITATIVE METHODS AND RELATED RESEARCH PROCESSES

The methods and processes discussed below have been employed to assist the researcher in the exploration of the proposed research question. The discussion of methods includes the elaboration of various techniques and procedures that were used in this study. The methodological aspects underlying these methods is also addressed for the sake of completeness.

#### 3.3.1. Literature review

The literature review provided a critical and integrative synthesis of the ways in which various researchers have approached the research domain in which this particular study is situated. Since it was important to locate this study in the context of what has been done before in the same field, related empirical research was examined. Wellington (2000:34) contends that the researchers' *job is not just to mould his/her own brick but to slot it into the wall of existing understanding in that field.* In order to do so the researcher was required to narrow down an inquiry and then to explore the literature in that field (ibid.). The literature was reviewed so as to justify the researcher's own endeavour to extend the scope of existing studies by

investigating teachers' understanding of the human right to religious freedom. The narrative of the literature reviewed was presented in the second chapter.

### **3.3.2. Sampling strategy**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:166), it is sometimes *appropriate for you to select your sample ... based on your judgment and the purpose of the study*. Gerson and Horowitz (2002:205) suggest that

*... although the sampling procedure need not be strictly random, it is important to choose a sample carefully and with as little bias as possible. Readers and researchers alike need to be confident that the findings reflect larger trends and not just the idiosyncrasies of a narrow or self-selected group.*

Maykut and Morehouse (in Wellington, 2000:62) contribute to the discussion by stating that *the selection of a sampling strategy depends upon the focus of inquiry and the researcher's judgment as to which approach will yield the clearest understanding of the phenomenon under study*. It could also be argued that, to some extent, time, geographical and material constraints could influence the selection of sampling strategies.

Purposive sampling takes place when researchers handpick cases on the basis of their *typicality*, thereby building a sample that was satisfactory to the requirements of a specific study (Cohen & Manion, 1994:89). Convenience sampling involves selection based on geographical proximity to the researcher or because the specific groups are the only option open to the researcher (Wellington, 2000:59). For the purposes of this study non-probability sampling was employed, using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling, since it was likely to result in higher response rates and it was the best option in this small-scale research (Wellington, 2000:60). Purposive sampling suited this study because the selected schools could respectively be viewed as typical government schools (as opposed to

independent schools<sup>60</sup>) representative of former Model C and former HoD schools and peri-urban black schools. The schools selected all accommodated the GET band.

### 3.3.3. Pilot study

The researcher experienced difficulties with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC) in respect of time delays<sup>61</sup> in gaining permission to undertake research in the selected schools. To avoid further time delays a pilot study of the questionnaire and interview schedules to be used in the research process was conducted before the formal research activities took place, when access to the schools was eventually granted.

The piloting of a study refers to the testing or drafting of methodological instruments to ensure comprehensibility and the success of the methodological instruments to be used (cf. Wellington, 2000:105). The self-administered questionnaires and interview questions were informally<sup>62</sup> piloted, or pretested, with respondents who were GET teachers, not part of any of the three schools involved in this study, but for whom the questions were nevertheless relevant because they taught in contexts where they experienced religious diversity. The respondents included members of the ethnic and language groups with whom the researcher would be engaging. This was done in order to assist the researcher in eliminating ambiguous, unclear or insensitive questions (cf. Wellington, 2000:78). The ordering of some of the questions was also revised.

### 3.3.4. Survey research

Especially when used with non-probability sampling, *survey research can be a useful tool of social enquiry* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:233). In a survey, questions are either asked by an interviewer or they are written down and given to respondents for completion. In this study, both self-administered questionnaires and interview schedules were used.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:257), survey research assumes *that a questionnaire item will mean the same thing to every respondent and that every given response means the same when given by different respondents*. This had implications for how questions were

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<sup>60</sup> Independent or private schools enjoy autonomy in respect of decision making concerning the school policy and school ethos.

<sup>61</sup> Permission was requested in March 2007 and only granted in July 2007.

<sup>62</sup> That is, without KZNDEC consent and not in a formal school setting.

worded. The survey researcher was obliged to ask exactly the same questions of all respondents in the self-administered questionnaires.

A possible criticism of survey research could be that the artificiality and potential superficiality of the survey format could make this form of research weak, putting a strain on validity. The researcher endeavoured to counter this by establishing a thick description of the context and by asking open-ended questions that demanded a full response, as opposed to matrix questions (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2001:242). The researcher also contextualised the self-administered questionnaires for the respondents and did the same for those taking part in the face-to-face interviews. She did this by explaining the purpose of the research, the role of the respondents, and by addressing possible related queries. The self-administered questionnaires were standardized in the sense that all the respondents were asked the same questions. Although the semi-structured interviews were more flexible, a standardized interview schedule which contained a clear list of the issues to be addressed was drawn up. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:263, 266), standardization of the data to be collected represents a strength of survey research. The triangulation of data would also add to the validity of the research process.

#### **3.3.4.1. Self-administered questionnaires**

Both closed- and open-ended questions were used. Closed-ended questions required the respondents to select an answer from amongst a list provided by the researcher. Open-ended questions were less restrictive and allowed the respondent to reply freely. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 237), *the respondent should be able to read an item quickly, understand its intent, and select or provide an answer without difficulty*. Self-administered questions are *only appropriate when the population under study is adequately literate* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:258) so that they can read and understand the questions and respond accordingly.

In this study the respondents should reliably have been able to answer the questions. They were all qualified teachers who were in service, teaching in the medium of English, in contexts of religious diversity. All the teachers would have their own biography and would be able to respond to the questions relating to this aspect of the research, and they would also be able

to respond to the questions relating to the school context in which they found themselves. The researcher anticipated that the respondents would be willing to participate and to respond without fear of, for example, reprisal. Respondents would also have been encouraged to simply report that they did not know, had no opinion or were undecided in those instances where that was the case (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 237).

The researcher considered having the questionnaire translated for the selected peri-urban school, but elected not to do so because the respondents taught in English. Moreover, the researcher would be meeting with the respondents when they were completing the self-administered questionnaire and she could give clarity where there was any uncertainty.

As suggested by Babbie and Mouton (2001:239), the self-administered questionnaire was uncluttered and had a clear layout. The questions were ordered in such a way as to look firstly at biographical detail (including 'religious history and identity') and concept clarification (where the respondents were asked to clarify their understanding of 'religious freedom' as a human right) and secondly, to investigate the school context in which the respondents found themselves. Introductory comments outlining the focus of the study were given; each questionnaire had a serial number allocated to it for purposes of order and reference; the pages were numbered; clear, basic instructions for completion were given; all the questions were essential to the study; and there was no duplication of questions.

This research instrument, in which each respondent was asked a comparable set of questions, provided an orderly experience to the respondents (cf. Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:206), all of whom returned completed questionnaires, and facilitated an organised process of data analysis for the researcher.

#### **3.3.4.2 Face-to-face interviews**

Interviewing is a method whereby a researcher can become familiar with respondents and their 'worlds'. This research method is well established in the research domain of Religion in Education (cf. Moore & Habel, 1980s, 1990s; Jackson, 1997; Roux, 1998; Ferguson, 1999; Ferguson & Roux, 2003b; 2004). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:249), *the interview encounter has the explicit purpose of one person obtaining information from another during a*

*structured conversation based on a prearranged set of questions.* It was incumbent on the interviewer (who, in this study, was also the researcher) to establish a rapport and confidentiality (cf. 3.4.) with the respondents to eliminate possible fear and anxiety. The interviewer tried to put the respondents at ease, in an attempt to make the interview experience enjoyable. The researcher achieved this by dressing appropriately yet inofficiously, and by addressing the respondents as colleagues and stressing the need for and the importance of their input.

The interviewer attempted to establish a rapport with the respondents by being pleasant and relaxed and friendly, without being too casual, and she tried to communicate a genuine interest in the respondents (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2001:251 -252). She also tried to maintain a neutral position so as not to antagonize or upset the respondents. It was important to maintain a position of neutrality through which questions and answers were transmitted so as not to influence a respondent's perception of a question or a given answer. 'Don't know' responses to questions were minimized as the interviewer probed for answers by rephrasing, redirecting and clarifying the question. The interviewer was receptive to body language and general reactions to the study, thereby gaining insight into respondents' understanding of the questions.

In open-ended questions it was important for the interviewer to record the exact answer without attempting to summarize, paraphrase or correct bad grammar. The interviewer made important observations aside from responses to questions asked in the interview. Comments made in the margin explained aspects of the responses not conveyed in the verbal recording, such as a respondent's apparent hesitation in answering, possible anger, or embarrassment.

According to Gerson and Horowitz (2002:204), *effective interviews need to guide respondents through a maze of life experiences in an orderly fashion and within a limited period of time.* Moreover, interviews should provide an opportunity for the respondent to step back and reflect upon his/her experiences, actions and situations (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:210). Adding to this view on interviews, Lawler (in Du Preez, 2005:112) states that this method *assists social actors in exploring and interpreting their own worlds and finding their place in it.*

Conducting interviews requires *substantial forethought and advanced planning* by the researcher (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:204). According to Denscombe (2003:164), forethought begins when the researcher asks him- or herself whether or not the research requires *the kind of detailed information that interviews supply*, and whether it is *reasonable to rely on information gathered from a small number of informants*. Gerson and Horowitz (2002:215) suggest that *interviewing provides a way to uncover the motives, meanings and conflicts experienced by individuals as they respond to social and interpersonal situations and conflicts*. The respondent is required to recall the past, grasp the present and think about the future (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002: 165). It is thus the responsibility of the researcher to create a climate of trust and mutual commitment with the respondent in a limited period of time (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:210). This should preferably take place before the interviewing process comes to an end (Kvale, 1996). It would entail clarifying the purpose of the interviews, laying out the process, conducting the interview, transcribing it, analysing it, verifying the data, and reporting the process. This process provides a good framework for conducting interviews.

Respondents may skip questions in a self-administered questionnaire and they cannot be probed for clarification or further explanation. The finer nuances of voice intonation, body language and facial expressions that contribute towards the creation of meaning are also absent from written responses. Thus the interview serves a vitally important role in the collection of data, since it complements the self-administered questionnaire data. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:250), *a properly designed and executed interview survey ought to achieve a completion rate of at least 80 to 85 per cent*.

In this study semi-structured interviews were used. Structured interviews involve tight control over the format of questions and answers. The semi-structured interviews included a clear list of issues to be addressed, but the interviewer was prepared to be flexible in terms of the order of questions, and answers were open-ended. The respondents were given the opportunity to develop ideas and speak more widely on issues raised by the interviewer.

The interviews were digitally recorded and field notes were taken during and immediately after the interviews to fill in some of the relevant information that the digital recording alone might have omitted. Transcription of the recorded interviews formed a substantial part of the

method of interviewing. It was important because it brought the researcher 'close to the data', which was easier to analyse in text rather than in digital form. The researcher did, however, from time to time, return to the recorded interview to check the accuracy of the transcription.

#### **a. Individual interview**

The individual interview differs from most other types of interviews in that it is an open interview in which the opinions and views expressed throughout the interview stem solely from the respondent. This qualitative interview is essentially a conversation in which the interviewer establishes the general direction for the conversation and pursues specific questions with the respondent. Ideally, the respondent does most of the talking. It is important for the interviewer to make the respondent seem interesting by appearing genuinely interested in him- or herself (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:290). Lofland and Lofland (1995:56 - 57) suggest that investigators

*... adopt the role of the socially acceptable incompetent when interviewing. You should offer yourself as someone who does not understand the situation you find yourself in and must be helped to grasp even the most basic and obvious aspects of that situation.*

According to Gerson and Horowitz (2002:201), *individual interviews provide the opportunity to examine how large-scale social transformations are experienced, interpreted and ultimately shaped by the responses of strategic social actors.* In the case of this study the individual interview with the school principals provided a thick description of the school context which placed the analysis of self-administered questionnaires and focus group interviews in perspective.

#### **b. Focus group interview**

Gerson and Horowitz (2002:205) suggest that it is important to carefully choose a sample group to interview *so that readers and researchers alike can be confident that the findings reflect larger trends and not just the idiosyncrasies of a narrow or self-selected group.*

In the focus group interview the respondents respond to each other and the researcher. This is in contrast to the individual interview where the respondent focuses only on the interviewer. In an individual interview the interviewer has more control and the individual respondent can share more information. By contrast, in focus groups, greater attention is given to the role of the interviewer as moderator of the process and there is less depth and detail about the opinions and experiences of any individual respondent. Focus groups could lead to insights that might not otherwise have come to light through the one-to-one conventional interview.

The comparative advantage of focus group interviews as an interview technique lies in the opportunity to observe interaction on a topic. Group discussions provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in the respondents' opinions and experiences, as opposed to reaching such conclusions by analysing separate statements from individual respondents in individual interviews. In setting up focus groups, sufficient participants are selected so that the conversation does not fall flat if some members choose to remain silent. There is a need for the interviewer to facilitate the conversation for the whole group as opposed to just one person.

### **3.3.5. Triangulation of data**

Triangulation is generally considered to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275). It entails the process of utilizing multiple methods in an attempt to enhance the validity and reliability of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:275). By using different methods of data collection the limitations of single methods are eliminated and concurrently the richness and complexity of human behaviour is accommodated (Cohen & Manion, 1994:233). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003:8), *the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question.*

For the purpose of this study triangulation was assured by using different research methods and processes such as self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured individual interviews and semi-structured focus group interviews. These methods complemented but also contrasted with one another, and therefore had the propensity to increase the validity and reliability of the research.

### 3.4. THE ETHICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Ethics is a vital aspect to consider when engaging in research and it is important that researchers should familiarize themselves with the ethical and moral issues embodied in research processes. This is necessary as it demonstrates that the study has been carefully planned and thought through.

In this study the researcher obtained informed consent in writing from all respondents. The respondents received a clear explanation of the expected tasks in which they would be expected to participate, enabling them to make an informed choice for voluntary participation (Appendix C). In asking each of the respondents to sign an informed consent form (Appendix C), they were made aware of the research objectives. The respondents were also informed of the parameters of confidentiality of the information supplied by them. The identity of the respondents was concealed and anonymity was guaranteed in the consent agreement. The researcher did not falsify, fabricate or manipulate data to establish outcomes.

According to Cohen and Manion (1994:348), each stage of the research process may give rise to specific ethical challenges; hence, challenges may occur based on the nature of the research project, the context of the research, the procedures adopted, the nature of data collection methods, the nature of the participants, the type of data to be collected, and how the data will be utilized.

This particular study was not precluded from ethical dilemmas. Since the study aimed at exploring how teachers' biography and context influence their understanding of 'religious freedom', values and belief systems of individuals came into play. The researcher was aware that emotions, values and belief systems of respondents might be in conflict with her own emotions, values and belief systems and that this may result in grave ethical challenges (cf. Cohen & Manion, 1994:363).

The researcher needed to access the schools she had selected in order to embark on the research task. This also posed some challenges because the researcher could not regard this access to the selected schools as a matter of right (Cohen & Manion, 1994:354).

Consequently, certain procedures needed to be adhered to. The first procedural step was to gain access to the selected schools with acceptance by those whose permission was required (Cohen & Manion, 1994:354). The researcher contacted the three schools selected for the research study and informally asked for their permission. Thereafter, a letter and the research proposal were sent to the KZNDEC to apply formally for consent to conduct research in the schools in question (Appendix A). The same letter was also sent to the relevant schools. The letter presented the research question and explained the aims of the research. The KZNDEC granted the researcher permission in writing (Appendix B) to conduct the research. The researcher contacted the schools again and arrangements were made to meet the teachers who had been selected to participate in the research. During these meetings the researcher explained why the research was being undertaken, described the procedures involved and explained to the respondents the nature of the role that they were being asked to play.

Next, the consent and co-operation of the respondents were secured. A document, *Consent to Participate in Research* (Appendix C), was presented to them and explained. It was signed, and both the respondents and the researcher received a copy of the document. Cohen and Manion (1995:350) contend that such a consent document should consist of the following elements in order to assure that the respondents' rights are given due consideration: competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension.

'Competence' refers to the informative action the researcher needs to take so as to ensure that individuals are able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding their participation as respondents. 'Voluntarism' refers to the respondents' awareness that they may freely choose to participate or withdraw from the research project at any time. 'Full information' refers to the process by which the researcher informs the respondents of those aspects of the project they need to have knowledge of. 'Comprehension' encompasses the process by which the researcher explains the nature of the research in order to assist the respondents in fully understanding what the research is about (Cohen & Manion, 1994:351). The document, *Consent to Participate in Research* (Appendix C), appears to contain the required elements.

Another aspect that needed to be considered was the research methods and the possible ethical repercussions that they may raise (Du Preez, 2005:115). In this regard, Cohen and Manion (1994:374) maintain that *methodological and ethical issues are inextricably interwoven in much of the research* that has been designed as qualitative and interpretive. The motives for using specific methods were communicated to respondents and consensus was reached on this matter. Reaching consensus was an important process to ensure that respondents identified with the process, since this was important for the securing of trustworthy data.

In the presentation and interpretation of data it was important, for ethical reasons, for the researcher to protect the respondents' right to privacy, anonymity and for confidentiality to be maintained (Mouton, 2001:243). In discussing this aspect, Cohen and Manion (1994:367) explain that although *researchers know who has provided the information or are able to identify participants from the information given, they will in no way make the connection known publicly*. This should hold good within the overall obligation to report with accuracy and reliability.

### 3.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to explain the processes and methods that were used to help the researcher address the research question and the overall design of the research project. The selected research design was an empirical, qualitative study that incorporated elements of small-scale ethnography using a case study approach.

It has been argued that empirical research forms the foundation of the type of research was conducted and that the qualitative framework provides *a specific methodology, ontology and epistemology to guide and ground the research area and process* (Du Preez, 2005:116).

The following qualitative research processes assisted the researcher in addressing the research question: a literature review, the selection of a target group, the piloting of the study, the administration of self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews as well as the triangulation of the data collected.

The questionnaires and interviews would seem to have been appropriate methods that provided direct information relating to teachers' biography and context. The section dealing with ethical considerations explained the importance of conducting research in a supportive ethical environment and ensuring that ethical considerations were borne in mind in all stages of the research process.

In the following chapter, Chapter 4, the data collected by means of the above-mentioned methods and processes will be presented, discussed and analysed in an interpretive manner, using elements of discourse analysis.

## CHAPTER 4

### CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a critical analysis and interpretation of the data collected through questionnaires and interviews in the three schools selected for this study. It is important to consider that qualitative data cannot be presented as *pure* descriptions, because they are always the outcome of the researcher's interpretation (Denscombe, 2003:268).

Discourse analysis will be discussed as the theoretical framework for the process of analysis. Domain analysis will be applied as a specific method for re-arranging data to present it logically and understandably; and to make it more apt for interpretation. In the rest of the chapter the following is contemplated:

- The methodology and processes underlying the analysis of data (4.2.)
- A presentation of the profile of the three schools involved in this study (4.3.)
- The presentation, analysis, critical interpretation and discussion of the self-administered questionnaires (4.4.)
- The presentation, analysis, critical interpretation and discussion of the semi-structured interviews (4.5.)
- A discussion on the triangulation of the self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (4.6.) and
- Concluding remarks regarding the processes of data analysis and interpretation (4.7.)

#### 4.2. METHODOLOGY AND PROCESSES UNDERLYING QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA

Basit (2003:143) argues that the analysis of qualitative data *is perhaps the most demanding and least examined aspect of the qualitative research process* and warns that *there are no short cuts and one must allow plenty of time and energy for the task*, and that it is not a *separate self-contained phase*, but rather a process that continues throughout the research. Babbie and Mouton (2001:490) support this positing that *there is no one neat and tidy*

*approach to qualitative data analysis* and that it involves a great deal of *contemplation, reflection, imagination and experience* (Anderson, 1999:158).

There are a variety of techniques and strategies that can be employed to collect and interpret data. Generic guidelines have been provided by, amongst others, LeCompte and Preissle (1993:235 - 278), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Anderson (1999:157). These are presented below.

- Data should be *tidied up* (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). This is the process whereby raw data is assimilated by getting all materials into a similar format and numbering such raw data for reference purposes.
- The researcher should browse through the initial research question, aims, design, methodologies and theoretical underpinnings with a view to interpreting them later.
- The researcher should *immerse* (Wellington, 2000) her- or himself in all the data collected and make relevant notes. This process should include *reflection* (Wellington, 2000) as the data are checked for completeness, and questions and issues that arise are written down.
- Data should be coded and organized into themes (Anderson, 1999).
- Data should be sorted into clusters of classification to facilitate the search for regularities and patterns and to create new knowledge constructs (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).
- Lastly, what Wellington (2000) refers to as *relating and locating data* needs to take place. This is when the search for specific data to fill the generic clusters should begin (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

While making use of a combination of these guidelines, the researcher should keep in mind that qualitative research and analysis refer to moving back and forth in the research process (cf. Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:219).

According to Basit (2003:152) qualitative data are textual, non-numerical and unstructured. They need to be subdivided and assigned to categories (Dey, 1993). The process of

establishing categories and attaching codes<sup>63</sup> entails breaking up the data in analytically relevant ways. This can be done by, for example, coding a phrase, a line, a sentence or a paragraph. According to Terre Blanche & Durrheim (2002:144) *themes and coding break the linear sequence giving a fresh view on the data and allowing you to carefully compare sections of the text that appear to belong together*. Codes can be created inductively. This is the method whereby general conclusions drawn from repeated observations are arrived at. Miles and Huberman (1994) promote an approach which involves creating a provisional list of codes prior to fieldwork. This list emerges from the conceptual framework, list of research questions and sub questions of the study.

Qualitative analysis sees a richness and detail in the collected data and is better equipped to provide for ambiguities and contradictions than quantitative analysis (Denscombe, 2003:280 - 281). However, Denscombe (2003:281) also mentions that qualitative analysis has the propensity to become bound up with the self of the researcher and thus become less representative, oversimplified and decontextualized. With this overview of qualitative analysis in mind, the specific strategies and techniques used in this research study will be discussed next.

#### **4.2.1 Discourse analysis as theoretical approach to the process of analysis**

Discourse analysis is concerned with the interrelationships between language and society and the *interactive or dialogue properties of everyday communication* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:495). It is the one method allowing researchers to *move beyond the obvious to the less, and yet completely obvious* so as to reconstruct meaning (ibid.). Phillips and Jørgensen (2002:1) posit a definition of discourse as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world). They advocate that discourse contributes to the construction of social identities and social relations. It refers to *all aspects of communication* including dialogue, conversation and discussion in the broader sense (Stewart & O'Neill, 2003:100). It does not only refer to the features underlying communication, but also to who initiated it, the grounds on which it was initiated, and to whom it was directed (ibid.). The assumption can therefore be made that the act of analysing discourse refers to a process of making meaning of various aspects of communication.

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<sup>63</sup> Codes link different locations in the data and sets of concepts or ideas. Codes enable the researcher to move beyond the raw (unanalysed) data.

Fairclough (1995:69 - 70) describes the main aim of discourse analysis as that of exploring the link between language use and social practice. He suggests that this type of analysis generates critical social research that contributes *to the rectification of injustice and inequality in society* (1995: 77) and to promote *more egalitarian and liberal discourses and thereby to further democratization* (1995:80). He stresses that discourse functions as a form of social practice which can reflect or participate in the reinforcement of unequal power relations.

According to Fairclough (1995: 97) discourse analysis includes linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes. He argues that textual analysis not only gives insight about what is 'in' a text, but that it also illumines that which is equally significant from a socio-cultural analysis perspective, namely what is 'absent' from the text.

Discourse analysis, as a theoretical means to analyse qualitative data, seems to provide an adequate foundation for analysing data collected for this study. It also appears to complement the ethnographic methodology described in Section 3.2.3. In Section 4.2.3., the specific technique and strategy of organizing data for interpretation is provided. Discourse analysis falls within the category of 'social constructionist' methods. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002:149) constructionism *holds that the human life-world is fundamentally constituted in language and that language itself should therefore be the object of study*. In other words, language helps to construct reality. This differs ontologically<sup>64</sup> from an interpretive approach which is also employed in this study and which will be investigated under the following heading.

#### **4.2.2. The interpretive approach**

Whereas social constructionism is interested in how talk is used to manufacture experiences, feelings, meanings and other social facts, the interpretive approach is interested in the experiences, feelings and meanings that people talk about (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:154).

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<sup>64</sup> Has a different assumption about the nature of the reality that is to be understood.

The interpretive approach regards language as *neutral or transparent or as a route to underlying realities* (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:149). It considers what is 'outside' of language as privileged over language itself trying *to harness and extend the power of ordinary language and expression ... to help us better understand the social world we live in* (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:123). This approach suits the ethnographer who records or 'inscribes' social discourse, turning it from a passing event *which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted* (Jackson, 1997:33). The ethnographer needs to be candid about the interpretive nature of the approach: *...what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to ...* (ibid.).

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002:364) claim that the *interpretive research is always biographical and so the lives of ordinary men and women play a central role in the research texts that are created*. The interpretive approach tries to describe what it sees in rich detail by giving a 'thick description'. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002:125), this approach is about *telling it like it is, is telling it in context*. The meaning of a written text would be established through piecing together the context of the text's creation and thereby recreating the meaning of the author's words. The approach entails imagining and trying to understand texts in their context. This has been referred to as the *phenomenological perspective* (ibid.) which is central to qualitative methodology.

The researcher was the primary instrument for both collecting and analyzing the data and, as such, should give some indication of how a personal perspective in the phenomenon may have influenced the way in which data were collected and analysed (5.4.). Her interpretation should illuminate what is being studied (cf. Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:350). A coherent interpretation should include all relevant information and prior understandings. A reader should be led through the interpretation in a meaningful way in order to decide whether to agree or disagree with the interpretation that is offered.

It should be noted that an interpretation is offered at the end of the situation analysis of each school: A, B and C. In Section 4.3.4. general conclusions, based on all three schools, are presented.

Similarly, a synthesis and interpretation of responses is offered at the end of the presentation of the analysis of the self-administered questionnaires collected from each school: A, B and C. In Section 4.4.2. general conclusions, based on all three schools, are presented.

With regard to the semi-structured interviews with the Grade 6 LO teachers, both synthesis and an interpretation of responses are offered at the end of the presentation of the data gathered in each of the schools: A, B and C. In Section 4.5.2. a final analysis and general conclusions, based on all three schools, are presented.

#### **4.2.3. Domain analysis as method of organizing data to be interpreted**

Domain analysis as a means of clustering data requires the researcher to compare, contrast, aggregate and order data (cf. 1.6.2.2.). According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993:242) domain analysis implies the differentiation and sorting of data based on semantic relationships. This strategy or technique to arrange data for interpretation therefore denotes the demarcation and organization of data derived from specific meanings and underlying relations. This means that organizing data provides the researcher with the opportunity to analyse data based on semantic relationships underlying various responses easily and systematically. In Section 4.5. Wengraf's (2001) approach which is to be used specifically in analyzing the data gathered in the semi-structured focus-group interviews, is described in more detail. This approach is in keeping with Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to discourse analysis as described in Section 4.2.

### **4.3. SCHOOL SITUATION ANALYSIS**

According to Fairclough (1995:4)

*a principled basis for sampling requires a sociological account of the institution under study, its relationship to other institutions in the social formation; an account of the 'order of discourse' of the institution and of its ideological-discursive formations.*

The situation analyses attempted to provide an overview of the schools selected for this study. A total of 3 schools (Schools A, B and C) were used in the research. Thirty two in-service Grades 4 – 6 teachers completed the self-administered questionnaire and eight Grade

6 LO teachers participated in the semi-structured focus-group interviews. The principal of each school participated in an individual semi-structured interview. The list of scheduled questions asked during the interview with principals A, B and C can be found in Appendix D.

Answers to interview questions (IQs) 1 – 4, and the researcher's field notes provided a *thick description* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:272) of the school and its context. IQs 40 - 42 focused on support, if any, received by teachers from the KZNDEC, in order to facilitate a multireligion classroom environment and more specifically for LO teachers, to facilitate RE as part of LO. IQs 25 - 39 focused on providing an insight into the interpretation and implementation of 'religious freedom' in each school context. These questions investigated the extent to which the school policy made provision for:

- the equitable use of school facilities by religious bodies in the community;
- measures taken to ensure exam schedules and test dates do not conflict with important religious festivals/holy days;
- learners and staff to attend supplementary religious schools and places of worship;
- procedures pertaining to bereavement and the implications in different religions for absence from school and possible outward adornment indicating a bereavement;
- catering for specific religious dietary requirements at school functions;
- the purchase of reading material for the library that includes material representative of different religions but also not giving offence to certain religions;
- the equitable invitation of religious guest speakers to address the learners;
- the avoidance of possible conflict with religious beliefs when organizing certain fundraising activities;
- voluntary learner religious groups to meet during break or before or after school;
- religious dress codes as part of the school uniform;
- procedure to deal with bullying on the basis of religious prejudice and stereotyping;
- the inclusion of and format of a possible end of year school function;
- the format of the school assembly.

IQ 43 specifically investigated whether or not there was a school vision or mission statement and whether or not respect for 'religious freedom' was contained therein.

The principals' actual responses are indicated in italics with the researcher (who was also the interviewer) clarifying, and in some cases commenting where necessary, in brackets.

#### 4.3.1. School A

This was an English medium, Former Model C-school, co-educational, suburban, government school situated in a working class, formerly 'white' but now predominantly 'white' and Indian area situated in Queensburgh, some 20 km from Durban. The school catered for the GET and Senior Phases (Grade 7). It was a well resourced school<sup>65</sup> enjoying regular parental and community involvement and support. According to the principal, parents sent their children to this school, not only because of its geographical location and 'in area' accessibility but also *because of the ethos of the school*. The school had a current enrolment of 653 learners. There were 30 staff members, three quarters of whom were female. The learners were primarily white and Indian, although there were a few black learners who attended the school. The staff comprised an ethnic mix of the South African population<sup>66</sup>. The school management team consisted of the Principal, a Deputy Head and three Heads of Department.

Christianity and Hinduism were the religions most prevalent in the community surrounding the school, with Christianity the dominant religion. In the school the dominant religion amongst the teachers was Christianity<sup>67</sup> and amongst the learners, Christianity and Hinduism. The principal described the proportion as being *about half-half* (only three Indian families were Muslims). The researcher noted with interest that there was a Former HoD-school<sup>68</sup> a short distance from School A. This school was predominantly attended by Indian learners of the Hindu religion. For reasons described in more detail in Section 4.3.3. relating to School C, many Hindu parents chose to send their children to School A, despite the unapologetically Christian ethos of the school, because they believed that Former Model C-schools provided a better education for their children.

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<sup>65</sup> The degree of resourcing is indicated by either a quintile ranking (out of a total of 5 points) or a decile rating (out of a total of 10 points). School A enjoys a rating of 5/5.

<sup>66</sup> The ethnic mix on the staff comprised Indian and white and black teachers.

<sup>67</sup> The dominant 'type' of Christianity is Protestantism of an evangelical (spreading the gospel of Christianity) or charismatic or pentecostal (emphasis on the Holy Spirit) nature.

<sup>68</sup> HoD refers to the House of Delegates (previous Department for Indians).

Having received a copy of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) the School Governing Body (SGB), together with the School Management Team (SMT), discussed this document and the implementation thereof and, in consultation with the staff as a whole, determined the school's policy with regard to religion.

The religion policy was embedded in Clause 2.b. of the Mission Statement:

*We aim to promote a Christian ethos, a belief in and reverence for God, thus providing a basis for a sound faith from which learners can formulate their own life styles. At the same time, we will teach them to respect the beliefs of others.*

Although School A had a very strong Christian ethos, according to the principal the learners were taught to respect the religion and home culture of every individual in the school.

*... we don't try and break down anybody's religion, we respect their right to their faith.*

There was no actual religious policy which addressed the specific issues outlined in Section 4.3. However, the interview with the principal revealed the following responses:

- The school did take into account holy days in all religions, and tests or exams were not set to coincide with those dates. Although the school had such a strong Christian ethos, Ascension Day was not taken as a school holiday because neither Diwali nor Eid were taken.
- There was a Christian church that met and used the school premises. The school had not been approached by any other religious group to make use of its premises.
- The principal said that there was Scripture Union (SU)<sup>69</sup> that met in the school but no other religious societies. In response to the question as to whether the Hindu students would be allowed to start a Hindu students' society if they so wished, the response was:  
*I would feel nervous about it with our ethos – it has never happened.*
- No provision had been made with regard to staff or learners requesting to attend supplementary religious schools and places of worship either during school or during extra-curricular time.
- With regard to accommodating various religious practices related to bereavement the principal stressed that the school was very accommodating.

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<sup>69</sup> SU or Scripture Union provides an opportunity for Christian learners or anyone who is interested to meet voluntarily, usually during a school break, or before or after school.

... anytime it is a religious thing, I don't stand in the way at all.

- With regard to school functions and dietary requirements, the school made sure that there were vegetarian dishes available and *something else for everybody else. We have some Hindu staff in the tuckshop that insist on the food being Halaal (sic). They insist on it.*<sup>70</sup>
- The principal was very careful about what materials are purchased for the library:
 

*We really have to be careful as sometimes we have purchased something that has been totally out of line. Not from a religious aspect, but as far as things that bring in demonic stuff. I have actually had to remove books. They are shocking. And we only find out later. Material dealing with information on world religions, different cultures, festivals is fine but as soon as it gets into spiritual practices (sic) or as soon as it gets into anything satanic we don't allow it.*
- The school held fundraising events but no activities involving magic were allowed: *Anything like that where they want to take control of the mind.*
- According to the principal, dress code from any religious perspective was not an issue in the school, except for a few girls who did not want to wear the school swimming costume and *where they have wanted to wear the long type things (sic). With regard to jewellery we allow the little red things (the Hindu sacred thread), anything that is religious.*
- The end of year function had moved away from having any religious significance.
 

*We do have at the end of the year the carol service, which has been like a tradition, and the strange thing is that the Hindu parents love it. The thing with the Hindus is that they accept a whole lot of stuff and that is why they also bring their children here because we claim to be a Christian school they believe that this would get a good schooling and get good values taught to them.*
- Although the school did not have a bullying policy per se, the Code of Conduct was very clear that the rights of the individual, including religious rights, needed to be respected.
- No religious practitioners from the community were given access to the school.
 

*...we prefer not to have anyone of any religion coming in. We don't want to encourage everything. Ja, so we would rather, umm, teach our ethos and we don't want different people coming in.*
- According to the principal the school assembly had a definite Christian flavour.

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<sup>70</sup> The incongruence needs to be noted: Hindu-Halaal. It is usually Muslims that insist on Halaal food.

*...it is the only place that we in actual fact bring our religious ethos in ... and that is because we still do our Christian story and we sing songs that are Christian and say the Lord's Prayer.*

The school song, found in the School Prospectus, was not typically Christian:

*We thank our God above for a school which is our pride, we thank Him too for giving us talents that spread so wide...*, although the principal referred to it as specifically Christian.

In response to IQ 43, the school did have a Mission Statement and the researcher was given a copy of this. It was contained in the comprehensive school prospectus which also indicated the School Code of Conduct. The SGB claimed to endeavour to uphold the Christian ethos of the school while teaching learners to respect the beliefs of others.

Principal A: *I think what it (the Mission Statement) probably says, in our whole mission statement, is that the school has a very strong Christian ethos, and exactly what we say to the parents, that we teach our children to respect the beliefs of others.*

The principal continued:

*if you have got a child that comes to that school who is, let's say Muslim, I don't believe that you have the right to infringe on that child's belief, on that child's cultural background. So although everything that happens around that child will be Christian, you can't directly break down that child's belief, and they should not be bullied in any way, by teachers or children, according to their belief. I don't believe that a school is like a church where someone can stand up and say, this is right and this is wrong, and what you are doing is wrong what they are doing is right. I think that we have moved away from that kind of thing. You actually can't do it ... I don't think that the school is the place anymore for propaganda in any way, even though I come with very strong Christian beliefs.*

Clause 3 in the Code of Conduct stated that:

*Each learner has the right to be treated with respect by the members of the school community, irrespective of personal, cultural, racial and religious difference and the responsibility to respect the rights and feelings of others, to display understanding and consideration towards others. He/she should not intimidate or ridicule others.*

The Code of Conduct also states that *learners are not to practise any form of Satanism or exploration of the occult on the school premises, nor are they to influence or try to influence others in this regard.*

The section of the Prospectus dealing with the School Curriculum states that the Curriculum aims to help learners to:

*Develop appropriate personal, social and moral values and to respect the values of others and to tolerate other views and ways of life.*

In response to IQs 40 - 42 the principal indicated that LO was facilitated by specific teachers. Neither they nor any of the staff had received any support or training from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC) with regard to facilitating a multireligion classroom environment, let alone RE lessons. She went on to say that the staff had

*discussed (their) religious curriculum and as a staff we decided that we would veer away from the religious aspect totally and we would concentrate on culture (pause) so we would do things like festivals and we would do things like, um, where they worship maybe, which is part of the curriculum, but we concentrate more on right living and values and the rest of LO.*

The principal clarified that as a staff the decision was taken to remove RE from the LO curriculum.

#### **4.3.1.1. Interpretation of analysis of School A**

By analyzing the semi-structured interview with the principal the researcher provided a thick description of School A. This appeared to be a well run, well resourced school that had decided to maintain a strong Christian ethos (in spite of the National Policy directive, as expressed in the Religion and Education Policy (2003), saying that all government schools should have a multireligion ethos, not favouring one religion above any other). The interpretation of 'religious freedom' was that the school should be free to maintain Christianity as the main religious ethos, while respecting those who belonged to another religion, but not allowing them to express this religion in the school. A process of assimilation had taken place whereby learners of religions other than Christianity were admitted to the school as long as they adopted the school ethos. The question could be asked whether Indian Hindu parents

were perhaps acquiescing to the Christian ethos in order to gain what they believed to be a superior education for their children at a Former Model C school (cf. Section 4.3.3.).

It was apparent that the principal was not fully au fait with the nuances and beliefs of religions other than Christianity and incongruences in her responses highlighted this fact. There seemed to be a deep seated fear about introducing a multireligion approach (cf. principal's comment that she would feel uncomfortable about any voluntary meeting other than SU). There seemed to be a real fear of the demonic and Satanism (cf. principal's comments about material acquired for the library and fundraising activities) to the extent that Satanism was mentioned in the Code of Conduct. By applying the principles of discourse analysis and looking not only at the text (in this case the principal's responses) but at what was absent from the text (remained unsaid), the researcher would suggest that there was a fear on the part of the principal (and possibly also some parents and staff, considering that the school ethos and religious policy were determined after broad consultation) that by investigating any religion other than Christianity, learners, and especially the Christian learners, would be exposed to the demonic.

There was a need to cling to the exclusivity of Christianity and to keep other religions out of the experience of the Christian learners. This was cause for concern, especially because according to the principal, half of the learners were Hindus. As all-embracing a religion as Hinduism is, this approach to the religious ethos of the school did not allow for the learners, and indeed the staff, to gain some understanding and appreciation of a religion and culture different to their own, be it Hinduism for the Christians or Christianity for the Hindus.

The principal's hesitations and body language displayed some discomfort. She was resolute in her defence of School A as a school with a Christian ethos, but was also aware that this ran contrary to the state ideology. Unsaid, but obvious, was that she wished that her school could comprise only Christian staff and learners and that Christianity alone could be practised as a religion in the school.

However, several responses also demonstrated a compassion for the humanity of learners of other religions (cf. comments about cases of bereavement, religious 'jewellery' and swimming attire).

The fact that many of the issues highlighted in IQs 25 - 39 had not been discussed or considered (mainly because they were not seen to be relevant at that point in time) indicated that the intention was to remain a school with a strong Christian ethos and that staff and learners should try to continue with 'business as usual' as far as possible.

School A has an established institutional identity (cf. Jenkins, 1996) determined by the SGB and SMT, as a school with a definite Christian ethos which does not entertain a multireligion approach. This hindered the degree of agency that individuals had to construct their 'religious identity' (cf. 2.2.3.) as members of another religion.

Christian teachers could possibly feel overwhelmed and disempowered in a multireligion context, having to facilitate lessons about belief systems and values which were not part of their cultural and/or religious and spiritual traditions. In a context where Christianity was no longer the institutionalized religion, School A had decided, according to the principal, to exclude RE from the LO programme as far as possible, before the KZNDEC possibly intervened, so as to remain in keeping with the ethos already described.

In a definitive sentence it would appear that School A collectively identified itself as a Christian school. It opted for an assimilatory approach and in so doing kept Christianity 'in' and other religions 'out'.<sup>71</sup>

#### **4.3.2. School B**

This was an English medium (Grades 4 - 7) and Zulu medium (Grades R - 3), co-educational, peri-urban government school situated in a very poor, AIDS ravished, 'black' area about 30 km inland from Durban. All staff and learners at this school were 'black' as defined in Section 1.2. At its inception this was a Roman Catholic mission school. With the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 it was forced to close as a mission school, and after being transferred initially to the Department of Bantu Affairs, it eventually came to be administered by the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (KZDEC).

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<sup>71</sup> 'In' and 'out' groups (cf. Jenkins, 1996).

The school catered for the GET and Senior Phases (Grade 7). Although for some inexplicable reason to the school principal the KZNDEC has classified this school as well resourced, it was in reality very poorly resourced and received little or no parental or local community support of any kind. Any support that was received came from the local Mariannahill Monastery and from a New Covenant Ministries International (NCMI) church in the nearby Pinetown area. This support mainly took the form of food supplies and other basic necessities from the Monastery and also from the Catholic Institute for Education (CIE) which was based at the Monastery. The NCMI church provided regular food parcels for many indigent families, and also facilitated LO classes twice a week. This church had also initiated a vegetable growing scheme in the school grounds. It was also involved in a small extra-curricular initiative holding netball and soccer coaching sessions at the school from time to time. It must be noted, however, that there were no formally laid out sports fields and facilities. The SMT consisted of the Principal, two Deputies and four Heads of Department.

There were 1170 learners currently enrolled at the school and 32 staff, of whom 5 were men. There were only 15 classrooms to accommodate these learners, which immediately led to problems relating to severe overcrowding. It was not uncommon for three teachers to teach simultaneously in one classroom and for a class to consist of as many as 60 - 70 learners. There were only ten toilets in the entire school to serve the needs of both teachers and learners and the septic tank overflowed regularly. There was no front office reception area and apart from providing for his own needs, the principal's 'office' served as a staff room, sick bay, 'library', 'music room' and administration office. It also housed the school's only telephone, computer and photocopying machine.

The 'library' consisted of two shelves holding books donated from various sources. Most of the books were outdated and irrelevant to the learners. A piano donated by an affluent girl's school in the Kloof area<sup>72</sup> was housed in the 'music room' section of the principal's office. There was no music teacher to make use of the piano. A steel cupboard in a corner of the same 'office' served as the 'science laboratory' as it contained a limited amount of science equipment which teachers could draw on to demonstrate science experiments. The

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<sup>72</sup> Kloof is an affluent, predominantly 'white' residential area about 30 km from Durban.

principal's comment was that the staff were reticent or, in his words, *too lazy*, to fetch material from his 'office' to use in the classrooms and then return it again.

The learners, and the community from which they came, had been severely affected by the AIDS pandemic. There were many learners (the principal gives a rough estimate of 70%) without parents and a substantial percentage were themselves HIV positive. Often there were grandmothers who provided parenting roles, or else neighbours who stepped in to fill the role, but it was also the case that the learners themselves (typically the older siblings, some as young as twelve years of age) were the *de facto* parents. This situation contributed in no insignificant way to prevailing levels of crime and lawlessness, and was exacerbated by the high unemployment rate and poverty in the area (often referred to in informal discussions with staff members).

The religions represented in the community were listed by the principal to include the following: Catholicism, Shembe, Zionism, African traditionalism and Christianity, with Catholicism the dominant denomination. It was interesting to note that 'Catholic' and 'Christian' were separately identified to the degree that the Catholics were often referred to as 'the Romans' by the staff and learners, as is often typical amongst specific ethnic groups in KwaZulu-Natal. The staff members were primarily from the various Christian denominations, while the learners were more reflective of the religious composition of the community as a whole.

Although the school had an SGB, it was the Catholic Institute of Education (CIE), based at the local monastery, that seemed to substantially influence the religious ethos of the school. With regard to a school policy on religion, principal B indicated that he had a team attending to the policy. However, there was no actual religious policy which addressed the specific issues outlined in Section 4.3. The interview with the principal revealed the following:

- No religious practitioners from the local community were permitted to play a role in the school. The principal explained his reasons for this decision:

*You know, I stopped that. There were so-called pastors and then one of them came here. He pretended to be a pastor and I offered him a slot here to lead the morning prayers and thereafter I heard that he just came here to cheat us. You*

*know after prayers I ask children to give us 5c – 10c so that this person can pass to another school and offer you know the good service, spreading the gospel. Then I heard that he just came to cheat us and I decided to stop that. But we do call the local catholic priest down here when we have to open the occasions. Especially at Easter when we celebrate the Ascension.<sup>73</sup>*

- When asked if ‘religion freedom’ was promoted in his school, the principal’s response indicated that at one time he did invite all ‘denominations’ to lead the prayers, but that this process *got out of hand*. When asked by the researcher if the ethos of the school permitted learners and staff to have the freedom to believe whatever they choose and to practise Shembe<sup>74</sup>, for example, the principal replied: *No I stopped it*.
- The school did not have any formal extra-curricular programme, and so it did not experience the potential clash between school activities and religious classes after school. One of the teachers facilitated a SU group which the learners attended voluntarily.
- No religious groups were allowed to use the school premises. The principal said that doing so brought problems because *at the end of the day no one is responsible*.
- There was a bereavement procedure which allowed a learner to stay at home until the funeral procedure for a parent or other relative was finished. Teachers could take ‘family responsibility leave’.
- There was no policy regarding religious dietary requirements. The principal responded to this question making reference to the celebration of Heritage Day when he procured food for the learners from the local shop-owner.
- There was no library at the school, so the question pertaining to the purchase of library material was not applicable.
- There was no policy with regard to fundraising.
- No end of year function was held.
- There was no problem with dress code from any religious perspective.

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<sup>73</sup> An incongruence needs to be noted: the celebration of the Ascension at Easter. Also, having said that no ‘outside’ practitioners are allowed into the school, Catholic input is permitted and the local NCMI-church (VFC) facilitates LO lessons twice a week.

<sup>74</sup> This is an African Independent Church known as Shembe, after the founder, Isaiah Shembe, but more correctly called the Church of the Nazarites.

- The principal said that he was not aware of any problems in the school with regard to religious stereotyping or learners enduring prejudice because of what they believed.
- Daily school assemblies started with a special school prayer and a hymn, followed by general announcements before returning to the classroom.

In response to IQ 43 (whether or not the school had a vision/mission statement) it became evident that this school did not have a school prospectus, nor a mission statement nor a written code of conduct.

In response to IQs 40 - 42 the principal indicated that LO was taught by specific teachers and also Victory Faith Church (VFC), who teach LO to Grades 6 and 7 on Wednesdays and Thursdays. This local church organized for the teachers to attend two day 'Crossroads' life-skill workshops and the KZNDEC had agreed to fund the teachers' accommodation, while the school paid for transport to these workshops. No training or support had been forthcoming from the KZNDEC with regard to facilitating a multireligion classroom environment, let alone RE lessons.

#### **4.3.2.1. Interpretation of analysis of School B**

Although the religious make-up of this school was predominantly Christian, unlike School A it was not as homogeneous. Whereas the Christianity in School A was primarily Protestant in nature, School B comprised both Catholic and Protestant denominations as well as members of African Independent Churches (AICs) who followed yet another form of Christianity.<sup>75</sup> What was clear was that the CIE exercised a lot of influence in the school. The concept of 'religious freedom' was only understood in terms of the different Christian denominations represented in the school. Any idea of learning about other religions represented in KwaZulu-Natal was foreign. The SGB had not heard of or seen the Religion and Education Policy (2003). Many of the issues raised in IQs 25 - 39 were either irrelevant in this school context or irrelevant because the response to any question came from a mono-religious perspective.

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<sup>75</sup> There are many African Independent Churches (AICs). The two biggest groups in KwaZulu-Natal are the Zionists and the Church of the Nazarites. The AICs to a greater or lesser extent combine Protestant Evangelical (emphasize preaching about the Christian religion) or Pentecostal Christianity (emphasizing the third member of the Christian trinity, namely, the Holy Spirit) with traditional African beliefs.

Reading beyond the text, the researcher realized that 'religious freedom' was not a priority on this school's agenda. The KZNDEC had applied an 8/10 grading to this school, indicating that this was a well resourced school. It was anything but resourced. The physical needs of this school<sup>76</sup> were so great that these had become the main concern. The school drew on the services and resources and contributions of the CIE and VFC to meet some of the most basic needs in the school. The researcher gained the impression that the school would, to a great extent, maintain the religion, denomination or religious group of the 'hand that fed it', in this case the Catholic Church and to a lesser extent that of VFC.

In a definitive sentence it would appear that School B was far more concerned with the dire physical need for more classrooms and toilets and other facilities than with policy documents and the implementation of the human right to 'religious freedom'.

#### **4.3.3. School C**

School C was an English medium, former HoD, co-educational, suburban government school situated in the formerly exclusively Indian suburb of Reservoir Hills, some 15 km from Durban. The area in question was strongly impacted by apartheid legislation and planning in that more affluent Indians were forced into what was in fact a relatively small area. This artificially inflated land and property prices, encouraging a much higher housing density than would normally have been the case. With the abolition of apartheid legislation many affluent Indian people had moved to other areas. However, a good number still lived in Reservoir Hills. Despite the socio-economic status of the area, it was interesting to note that many Indian children<sup>77</sup> attended Former Model C schools in the adjacent affluent, formerly 'white' suburb of Westville and that many of the learners in the Reservoir Hills schools, in fact, came from the adjacent 'black' township of Clermont. With this in mind, it was not surprising to learn that most learners at School C were Blacks and a small minority were Indians. The staff, however, was dominantly Indian (only two were black teachers). It was not insignificant for

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<sup>76</sup> The physical needs included the repairing of the sanitation system, the installation of more toilets, building new classroom and other basic facilities. The KZNDEC promised to build 15 new classrooms and yet only five had been completed. This was totally inadequate to meet the needs of the school. The principal was disillusioned and so were his teachers.

<sup>77</sup> Almost exclusively Tamil-speaking. Tamils, according the principal of School C, had a higher economic status than Hindi-speaking Indians.

the children in School C and their families that the state of affairs described above necessitated complicated and often expensive travelling arrangements.

Given the area from which the majority of the learners in the school came (Clermont) it was not surprising to learn that there were many AIDS orphans in the school with grandmothers often being the primary caregivers, or children often raising themselves and their siblings. Based on daily interaction with members of staff and the learners themselves, the principal understood it to be a very severe problem. Many of the learners were very poor, and societies like the Hare Krishna movement in Chatsworth provided daily meals for them.

The school had a current enrolment of 667 learners and 27 staff, two of whom were men. The SMT consisted of the Principal, one Deputy Principal and three Heads of Department. The school catered for the GET and Senior Phase (Grade 7). According to the KZNDEC, School C was fairly well resourced with a decile ranking of 5/10 (cf. 4.3.1.). There was little parental involvement in the affairs of the school, which was not surprising in view of the fact that the majority of the parents did not live in the community where the school was situated. However, the broader Reservoir Hills community was quite involved in helping to meet some of the physical needs in the school. The school building was old and 'tired' and some attempts had been made to plant gardens, while colourful murals had also been painted on walls by the learners. The day the researcher visited, the school was to close early and would remain closed for two days while the water and sewerage systems were being repaired.

The dominant religion in the community was Hinduism, with a small percentage of learners being Christian. Of the Indian learners in the school (20% of the total), the principal estimated that 95% were Hindi-speaking Hindus (generally lower socio-economic Indians, see above) and that 5% of the Indians were Christians. The remaining 80% of the learners in the school were 'black' and, according to the principal, mostly Christian, comprising *a mixture of learners* (different denominations). *When it comes to religion now I don't know too much about Christianity (pause) but I know mainly it is Jesus, you know, when children talk.* With the exception of two Muslim women, the staff were exclusively Hindu devotees (Tamil and Hindi speaking).

The SMT met with representatives from all levels of the teaching staff to discuss policy and make decisions. According to the principal everything done in the school was *transparent*. The SGB were very supportive of the decisions made by the SMT.

*In a school situation you and the staff are here so you know basically what you want. You know what is best and in your best interest for the learners first and then the staff and we take it from there.*

The school did have a religion policy. It is presented below.

- *Mutual respect for and tolerance of all religions by all stake holders of the school (learners, educators, parents etc.) shall be the norm.*
- *Auspicious occasions in all religions will be recognized and celebrated by the school.*
- *If necessary, special assemblies will be held to highlight auspicious occasions.*
- *No religion shall dominate another – all religions will be given equal status.*
- *Religious holidays will be taken in accordance with the school calendar as determined by the KZNDEC.*
- *Closure of school for auspicious or religious functions shall be done in accordance with the regulations set out by the KZNDEC.*
- *Absenteeism of educators for religious purposes shall be dealt with in accordance with the regulations set out by the KZNDEC.<sup>78</sup>*

Although there was a religion policy, not all the specific issues outlined in Section 4.3 were addressed. The interview with the principal revealed the following:

- Different religious practitioners from the community donated food and various other supplies to meet the needs in the school, and were then invited to school assemblies to address the learners. In the assemblies the learners were made aware of different religions and cultures. Zulu and Indian dance, for example, was demonstrated.
- There were no voluntary religious groups such as SU that met voluntarily during the school day. The principal spoke about the Eastern Languages that were taught at the

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<sup>78</sup> School principals have the KZNDEC rules for conduct which need to be adhered to when applying to close the school for any reason, or when a staff member wishes to take leave.

school and how learners voluntarily participated. She also stressed that there were black learners who (with parental permission) were learning to speak Tamil or Hindi.

- The school facilities were used by Christian churches and also by Tamil groups for church services, prayer meetings and workshops. The facilities were used on an equitable basis, regulated by a timetable.
- The school made use of a calendar indicating the various religious holy days to ensure that teachers would arrange no important events, such as tests or exams, on those particular days.
- With regard to religious dietary requirements and dress codes the principal indicated that they were *mindful that most of the children eat Halaal. We are also mindful that the Indian children won't eat meat and pap. The safest way to go is with veg (sic). Every girl, whether Indian or Zulu, are (sic) permitted to wear white long pants.*
- When it came to bereavement, teachers were accommodated with compassionate leave. With regard to the learners, the principal indicated that they were *very accommodating. When we see that they are wearing a string on their arms or whatever, we ask them (what it signifies), but we are comfortable with it. It is not a fashion. We realize that it is essential to their religion. We are mindful of these things in the school.*
- Fundraising which took place at the school did not in any way infringe on any particular religion.
- There was no specific end of year function, but during the year an arrangement was made to have Easter eggs delivered for the children at Easter, and sweet meats to celebrate Diwali.
- With regard to bullying on the grounds of religious prejudice and stereotyping, the response was that the school has got a bullying policy, *but nothing specific in relation to religion because we don't have that problem. We don't have an issue.*
- Assemblies were commenced with the school prayer, which is a prayer of thankfulness and asking for help for the day. This was followed by general school announcements, while the National Anthem was sung every Monday.

In response to IQ 43 this school had both a mission statement and vision statement. The vision statement describes the school as

*... a multi-cultural, family oriented primary school ...*

The mission statement stated that *the professional staff are dedicated to providing a balanced programme so that learners will become well adjusted, effective members of society.* According to the principal, *the school's stance is to provide a balanced programme where our learners will become well adjusted, effective individuals in society. What we stand for, we are an inclusive school for all religions.*

In response to IQs 40 - 42, the principal explained (with a degree of offhandedness suggesting that the question was of no significance) that the LO teachers taught social development, which included time management and goal setting. She explained that the Eastern Languages teachers facilitated the RE part of LO and suggested that a thematic approach was adopted in RE.<sup>79</sup> The teachers had not been invited to attend any KZNDEC workshops focusing on the multireligion school environment or on facilitating RE. The only support that had been received from the KZNDEC had taken the form of posters and documents for the different types of religions that need to be included in (sic).<sup>80</sup>

#### **4.3.3.1. Interpretation of analysis of School C**

Of the three selected schools in this study, School C was the most embracing of a multireligion approach. It seemed to have the better understanding of 'religious freedom' as a human right, having deemed it sufficiently important to draw up a religion policy. This policy, however, was very superficial and needed to make reference to some of the issues not included in the policy, such as those raised in IQs 25 - 39.

The principal, while appearing to be au fait with the area of religious diversity, was, however, somewhat confused with regard to the different Christian denominations, and the difference between the Indian language groups in the school and Hinduism as a religion.<sup>81</sup> It was interesting to note that in a school where the learners were predominantly Christian, the principal expressed her lack of knowledge about Christianity (*I don't know too much*). It would

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<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately these language teachers, who were employed on a part-time basis, were not able to attend the semi-structured interview session with the Grade 6 LO teachers.

<sup>80</sup> DoE posters displaying basic information about the major religions represented in South Africa; the Policy for Religion and Education (2003); and the Teachers' Guide for RE (Grades 4 - 9) (2006).

<sup>81</sup> It is possible to be a Tamil-, or a Hindi- or Urdu-speaking Christian, for example.

be reasonable to presume that in a school purporting to foster 'religious freedom', the principal would have informed herself about the religion espoused by most of her learners.

It was apparent that in School C, a neutral stand was adopted with regard to religion. There was no dominating religious ethos and a sense that 'anything goes' prevailed, as long as the school functioned smoothly and the physical needs of the school were addressed, whether by the KZNDEC, or members of the Reservoir Hills community.

#### **4.3.4. General conclusions**

Unlike School B, Schools A and C had interacted with the Policy on Religion and Education (2003). School A had adopted an institutional identity as a school with a strong Christian ethos in which a multireligion approach was not promoted. Teachers were discouraged from promoting the study of other religions. A mono-religious, confessional approach was encouraged. The degree of agency, expecting individuals to construct their religious identities and express them, was severely hindered by the institutional discrimination towards religions other than Christianity.

School C, by contrast, advocated a multireligion approach, but any structured education about religion was marginal. The school's inclusive approach indicated a more informed understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' than was the case in Schools A and B. In School C teachers and learners had more individual agency to choose their religious identity.

School B had not engaged with the Policy on Religion and Education (2003). Christianity, and specifically Catholicism, remained the hegemonic denomination. This school was an example of structural determinism (cf. Beck in Adams, 2003) where the school imposed the interests of a particular religion, and of a specific tradition within the broader spectrum of that religion. The understanding of 'different religions' was confused with different Christian denominations or traditions.

Especially in Schools A and B, within their contexts of religious diversity, it would seem, from the above, that 'religious freedom' as a human right was either not well understood, or

completely misunderstood or disregarded, and a mono-religious approach was encouraged. This impacted directly on the implementation (or lack thereof) of the Religion and Education Policy (2003). The neutral stand adopted by School C promoted 'religious freedom', but little religion education took place.

#### 4.4. QUESTIONNAIRES

##### **4.4.1. Analysis, interpretation and discussion of self-administered questionnaires**

A total of 32 respondents (all Grade 4 – 6 teachers) completed the self-administered questionnaires: 11 in School A, 13 in School B and 8 in School C. In each school the researcher had the opportunity to speak to the respondents, explaining the purpose of the study and assuring the respondents that their anonymity would be upheld. The questions in the questionnaire were read through with them, bringing clarity where necessary. Respondents were encouraged to answer the questions as honestly and comprehensively as possible, and to indicate 'do not know' if they were unsure of a particular response. They could also choose not to give an answer.

In the case of School A, the questionnaires were completed on the same day and handed to the researcher. In the case of Schools B and C, the questionnaires were left with the respondents to be completed and returned the following day. In actual fact, the researcher was only able to collect the complete questionnaires a few days later. In Section 5.6.2. reasons for this are presented.

The self-administered questionnaire contained 32 closed and open-ended questions (Appendix E). The closed questions were of the selected response type. Principles of content analysis were applied in the analysis of the questionnaires (Dey, 1993:94; Gillham, 2000:63). To make the data manageable and meaningful, five broad categories were created by clustering responses to related questions (Dey, 1993:96).

The findings in relation to each of the schools were compared. Dey (1993:110) emphasizes that data must be considered in context, since meaning is also closely linked to context. The researcher's interpretations of the opinions, and the positions of the responding teachers

towards 'religious freedom', would take into account the settings in which these responses were produced (teachers' own backgrounds, as well as the current school context).

The five broad categories were: personal information (questions 1 - 11, 23) (see Table 1); religious biographical information (questions 12 – 15); concept clarification (questions 16 – 19); concept application (questions 20 - 22, 24, 27); and contextual information (questions 25 - 26, 28 - 32).

The **personal information** obtained from the respondents across the three schools is summarized in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Summary of personal information indicated on the self-administered questionnaires (Appendix E)**

	<b>School A</b>	<b>School B</b>	<b>School C</b>	<b>Total</b>
	N=11	N=13	N=8	N=32
<b>Gender: Female</b>	8	10	6	24
<b>Male</b>	3	3	2	8
<b>Age</b>				
20-30	8	0	2	10
30-40	3	8	0	11
40-50	0	5	3	8
50-60	0	0	3	3
<b>Years of teaching experience</b>				
0-5	7	2	2	11
5-10	3	4	0	7
10-20	1	6	3	10
20-30	0	1	2	3
30-40	0	0	1	1
<b>Years teaching at this school</b>				
0-5	8	5	7	20
5-10	3	4	1	8
10-20	0	4	0	4

	School A	School B	School C	Total
	N=11	N=13	N=8	N=32
<b>Government posts</b>	4	13	6	23
<b>Governing Body posts</b>	7	0	2	9
<b>Grades taught</b>				
Grade 4	4	6	4	14
Grade 5	3	3	1	7
Grade 6	6	5	6	17
				Note: some teachers teach more than one grade.
<b>Number of teachers teaching LO Grades 4-6</b>	4	3	4	11
<b>Tertiary Education</b>				
Degrees	10	4	5	19
Diplomas	1	4	2	7
Invalid answers	0	5	1	6

<b>Religious Affiliation</b>				26
Christianity:				
Catholic	1	3	2	6
Methodist	2	2	0	4
Baptist				
Dbn Christian Centre	3	0	0	3
Dutch Reformed	0	2	0	2
Assemblies of God	1	0	0	1
Evangelical	1	0	0	1
Charismatic	2	0	0	2
Lutheran	1	0	0	1
Apostolic Faith Mission	0	1	0	1
United Congregational	0	1	0	1
Act of Obedience Ministry	0	1	0	1
Zionist (AIC)	0	1	0	1
	0	2	0	2
Hinduism				
Islam (Sunni)	0	0	5	5
	0	0	1	1
Practising member of religion	10	11	8	29
Nominal (in name only)	0	2	0	2
Invalid answer	1	0	0	1

### **a. Religious biographical information**

The questions in this category investigated the role, if any, played by the religion of the respondents' parents in their formative years, and their earliest recollections of any belief systems and how these may have influenced them positively or negatively, if at all. The respondents were also asked at what stage they embraced the belief system they currently held, if applicable, and how this process occurred.

### **b. Concept clarification**

The following key concepts are pertinent to this study: 'human rights', 'religious freedom', 'multireligion' and 'RE' and 'Religious Instruction'. The questions in this category (concept clarification) required the respondents to clarify their understanding of these concepts. The researcher assumed that if the concepts were understood, they were more likely to be applied.

### **c. Concept application**

This category of questions focused on the implementation of the respondents' possible understanding of 'religious freedom' as a human right.

- Own religion and 'religious freedom'.

This category of questions investigated how respondents' religious affiliation, if any, might have affected the way in which they viewed 'religious freedom' as a human right. Respondents were asked whether or not they felt threatened in their own belief system, if any, or felt as if they had to compromise their beliefs in order to accommodate 'religious freedom' in their school context. They were also asked whether or not they thought it was possible to learn from the views and practices of other religions without compromising their own beliefs.

- Voice.

These questions asked respondents to reflect on whether or not they thought their understanding of 'religious freedom' (and how they voiced this) could impact on an entire school ethos and their teaching in the classroom, and whether, in respect of religious matters, they felt like they had a voice that was heard in the particular school.

#### **d. Contextual information**

This category of questions focused on the respondents' perspective of 'religious freedom' and how it was, or was not, affirmed in their particular school context. They were asked whether or not they thought the human right to 'religious freedom' was promoted in their school and whether or not religion was given any value or recognition. In answering these questions they were asked whether or not there was a dominant religion in the school and how they felt about this. Respondents were asked whether or not the purpose and value of RE, as part of LO, was recognized by the school. They were also asked whether or not school assemblies had a religious component and, if so, how this was facilitated. They were asked if they knew what their school policy was with regard to 'religious freedom', and whether or not they thought it was satisfactorily implemented. Finally, respondents were asked to assess whether or not the approach to religion in general, and in the classroom in particular, had changed since the introduction to the new Religion and Education Policy (2003).

The words in italics reflect the respondents' actual responses. Spelling and grammar in the responses have not been corrected. In places, where appropriate, the researcher has lent clarification in brackets. For reasons of anonymity respondents are referred to as A, B or C (indicating the school) 1, 2, 3 and so forth. Eight of the teachers who completed the self-administered questionnaires were Grade 6 LO teachers who were later interviewed by the researcher (4.5). They are respondents A2, A3, A5, A7, B1, C3, C4 and C5.

##### **4.4.1.1. School A (11 respondents)**

#### **a. Religious biographical information (Questions 12 - 15)**

With three exceptions, the parents of the respondents were all practising Christians. Earliest recollections for those whose parents were Protestant Christians included: going to church, going to Sunday School<sup>82</sup>, Youth<sup>83</sup>, celebrating Christian festivals, praying before meals and

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<sup>82</sup> Sunday School refers to classes that children attend on Sunday mornings while adults participate in the main Church service. Sunday School can take on different formats, depending on the Christian denomination.

<sup>83</sup> Youth refers to meetings of young Christians, usually held on Friday nights.

before going to bed. For those from a Catholic background the first Holy Communion<sup>84</sup> was mentioned as was going to Mass<sup>85</sup>.

One respondent's parents were not religious, while the other respondents' parents were Hindu. Respondent A5 said: *I had to participate in all the rituals which led me to question these practices ... My earliest recollections are of following certain rituals like lighting the lamp, abstaining from meat on certain days and large 'prayer' rituals to different deities.*

Respondent A7's parents initially followed Shembe, *which involves Christian practice and ancestral practices*, before converting to Christianity. Earliest recollections included: *For 'protection' against evil we would drink 'holy' water and get cut with a razor blade. Muthi<sup>86</sup> was put on those cuts as protection of course.*

Eight of the eleven respondents said that their parents' religion had a positive influence on them. For example, respondent A3 said: *...this formed the foundation to my belief system. Things I was taught stayed with me through my life.* Respondent A4 said: *...it gave me beliefs which were positive and vital for when I left home. It helped me when I needed to make decisions between right and wrong.* Two respondents said that the influence was negative *...because it was deceiving and led on the wrong path* (respondent A5) and *...it was painful and I did not believe in it personally but I did not have a voice because I was still very young* (respondent A7).

All eleven respondents claimed to be practising Christians, and most embraced this religion while still at high school. Respondent A10 said that his/her parents were not religious, and that he/she embraced Christianity *only a few months ago when a friend invited me to a talk.*

## **b. Concept clarification**

### **i. Human Rights (Question 16)**

Ten of the eleven respondents responded. Their answers are presented below.

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<sup>84</sup> The First Holy Communion takes place after Catholic children have completed Catechism classes (in which they learn about the doctrine of the Catholic Church, including teaching on the sacraments, one of which is Holy Communion).

<sup>85</sup> 'Mass' is the name by which the Catholic Church service is known.

<sup>86</sup> 'Muthi' refers to traditional African medicine, usually herbal in composition (Elion & Strieman, 2002).

- ... every human being has the right to live their life in a way that they choose religion, politics etc. ( respondent A3).
- The right of people to have a home, food, job and be safe in the country in which they live (respondent A4).
- ... something that every person is entitled to irrespective of race, colour, gender or religion (respondent A5).
- That all humans are treated the same and that they are accountable for themselves (respondent A6).
- That everyone is equal and deserves equal opportunities (respondent A10).

ii 'Religious freedom' (Question 17)

The following responses indicate the respondents' understanding of this concept.

- Every individual has the right to practise the religion of their choice without being intimidated or influenced by others.
- The knowledge and understanding of all religions, then being able to choose one's religion with all the knowledge that one have gained.
- The freedom to practise any religion of one's choice.

iii. Multireligion (Question 18)

For the following respondents it seemed that their understanding of this concept incorporated a combination of religions.

- People can believe in more than one religion and practise more than one religion (respondent A1).
- That you believe in more than one religion (respondent A6).
- All religions have their best qualities and attributes combined to create one 'combi' religion (respondent A2).

Other respondents suggested the following interpretations:

- ... teach about the different religions and give each learner the freedom to practise the religion of their choice (respondent A3).
- When someone, or a place, like a school, has got more than one religion (respondent A5).

- *This refers to multiple religions or religious practices e.g. a multi-religious school has a variety of practising religions in it (respondent A11).*

iv. Religion Education (RE) and Religious Instruction (Question 19)

RE was defined as the study of different religions and learning about their practices, and beliefs, providing an overview and insight into many religions. The prevalent understanding of Religious Instruction was that it focused on the teaching of a particular religion giving instruction as to what should be practised *with the goal of eventually converting or changing beliefs* (respondent A5).

c. **Concept application**

i. Own religion and 'religious freedom' (Questions 20, 21 & 22)

When asked whether respondents thought that their religious affiliation affected the way in which they viewed human rights issues such as 'religious freedom', six teachers said 'yes' and five said 'no'.

Those saying 'yes' included the following responses:

- *Yes, because you are determined in what you believe and don't alter on those beliefs (respondent A4).*
- *Yes, I think Christianity is the right way and only that should be practised (respondent A6).*
- *Yes, very much. Although I do not express this. Through pastors and most Christian people I know that people who are not Christian especially charismatic (spiritual) are from the Devil. I am still praying about it because this would mean that a large percentage will be going to hell (respondent A7).*

Those saying 'no' included the following responses:

- *No, as an educator it is possible to let my beliefs affect this issue. I respect the learners' beliefs and quite often discuss the different perspectives of other religions. I believe that each person has come to a place of understanding before embracing a specific religious belief they should not be pushed/or forced to do so (respondent A7).*

- *Not really. I do believe that my religion teaches me not to condemn other religions. I believe every individual has a choice to make on their own. I respect this (respondent A9).*
- *No, I respect other people regardless of their religion. They are free to practise their religion as long as it doesn't interfere with my freedom (respondent A11).*

Based on the previous question the respondents were asked whether they felt threatened in their own belief system and/or felt as if they had to compromise what they believed in order to accommodate 'religious freedom' in the school context.

The majority of the response was that they did not feel threatened or compromised, because they had 'religious freedom' and an understanding about and respect for each others' religions. Two respondents (A2 & A3) said that although they did not feel threatened or compromised in the school setting, the DoE policy regarding religion inhibited the promotion of their own beliefs, mentioning that the *new curriculum does threaten our (Christian) ethos and this might be a problem*. Respondent A9 was the only respondent to acknowledge that the school's Christian ethos could well compromise the beliefs of others: *I do believe the learners at this school have to compromise their beliefs. There is no religious freedom.*

The majority of respondents indicated that they thought it possible to learn from the beliefs and practices of other religions without compromising their own religious beliefs. These were some of the responses:

- *Yes, some of the disciplines in other religions help in leading a structured life (respondent A4).*
- *Yes, like meditating. I can learn this from, say, a Buddhist. I can use meditation to my own advantage and in my own religion. Anything that does not change the way that you look at your own religion is acceptable (respondent A8).*
- *Yes, many religions have views and values that overlap. So we can be reminded by each others' religions of how we ought to behave (respondent A9).*
- *Yes, for example I have seen the commitment and dedication of people to their beliefs and it has challenged me to be as committed to mine without compromising ever (respondent A11).*

ii. Voice (Questions 24 & 27)

These two questions asked respondents to consider how the way in which they voiced their understanding of 'religious freedom' could impact on a 'whole school' ethos and their teaching in the classroom, and secondly to consider whether or not they felt like they actually did have a voice in respect of religious matters that was heard in the school context. The respondents answered as follows:

- *If you don't know what religious freedom is or you interpret it differently to somebody else, it would influence your teaching (respondent A3).*
- *The educators could be less nervous and even content with their religious preferences (respondent A7).*
- *It could only benefit the teacher, because he/she understands who the child is and where they are coming from, and why they then do certain things (respondent A8).*
- *... without knowing you could enforce your religion on to learners, making your religion seem 'right' and theirs 'wrong' (respondent A10).*
- *The children will learn to respect each other and know how to react to certain scenarios. The classroom will have a happier environment when there is understanding (respondent A1).*
- *Huge Impact because we would have understanding and treat people correctly and not use incorrect stereotyping (respondent A4).*

Eight of the eleven respondents said that they felt they had a voice that was being heard in respect of religious matters. In support of this the following responses were noted:

- *Yes, majority of staff is Christian and we support and encourage each other (respondent A2).*
- *Yes – we have an open door policy where suggestions are welcomed (respondent A3).*
- *Yes, we are allowed to discuss things openly at meetings (respondent A4).*
- *Yes, we have had meetings re 'RE' and how we want to teach this in our school. We were free to voice our opinions (respondent A11).*

Those who felt that they did not have a voice said that all educators were Christian (respondent A5) or that *keeping quiet is safer* (respondent A7). Respondent A9 suggested that only a voice regarding Christianity would be heard: *I don't feel any other religion would.*

**d. Contextual information**

i. 'Religious freedom' in the school context (Questions 25, 26, 28 & 31)

Nine of the eleven respondents concurred that religion was given value in the school. Respondent A9 qualified this, however: *Yes, but only Christianity.*

Those saying that 'religious freedom' was promoted in the school, interpreted 'religious freedom' as *all the children are taught to respect each other and each other's feelings and beliefs* (respondent A1) (cf. 4.4.1.1.b.ii.).

Respondents saying that religion was not given value in the school included the following reasons:

- *No we don't ever really pay specific attention to any other religions other than Christianity and this is only done in assemblies* (respondent A11).
- *Not really. I sense that there's fear that 'religious freedom' is evil* (respondent A7).
- *No, the norm is that non-Christian education is not employed. The policy set by management is strongly based on a very Christian ethos of which I do agree with but we are not a private school, we are a Government school and should be accommodating at least to an extent and respect other religions. We must therefore be able to as a 'Christian school' teach the values of being good Christians by respecting all others at our school. Our school assemblies are completely Christian, which I enjoy but we are certainly not being fair to non-Christian learners* (respondent A9).

From the above responses it was clear that Christianity was the dominant religion in the school. This was confirmed by the following responses:

- *Yes, it's (Christianity) all around us. I feel great but I feel for the learners* (respondent A9).
- *Yes, Christian. Almost instructed at interview (for job at school). Good idea, but would be nice to freely explain to kids* (respondent A2).
- *Yes, our ethos is Christian and so are our assemblies. I love it because I am a Christian* (respondent A11).

Half of the respondents, the Grade 4 - 6 teachers at School A, said that they were aware of the school's policy on 'religious freedom'. With regard to the implementation of this policy

respondent A2 said that no one was discriminated against because of their religion, while respondent A6 said that Christianity was practised but other religions were respected. Respondent A3 was more direct in stating the following: *We're a Christian school and we do not give space/time to other religions to practise their religion at school.*

ii. Religion Education (Question 29)

Those teachers who indicated that the value of RE as part of LO was recognized by the school, offered contradictory responses.

Respondent A2 said: *Yes, culture and religion are discussed openly* and respondent A9 said: *Yes we do, in LO, teach learners about other religions.* These responses seem to stand in contradiction with that of respondent A4 who said that *RE is recognized but there is no specific lesson structure or outcomes on religion.* Respondent A5 continued: *At our school the ethos is Christian so we don't emphasise 'RE' as stated in the document (Religion and Education Policy (2003)). We rather concentrate on the morals and values that are common.* Respondent A3 said that the school *is unhappy about the RE policy from the DoE* and respondent A7 said that RE as part of LO *is not being dealt with because it is a thorny issue.*

iii. School assemblies (Question 30)

The unanimous response of the respondents was that there was a religious component to school assemblies, that it was run by the teachers, that it was Christian in nature and included a Bible reading, prayer and Christian songs (respondents A4, A7, A3).

iv. Religion in school after 2003 (Question 32)

Whilst half of the eleven respondents indicated that they didn't know if the schools' approach to religion had changed since the introduction of the Religion and Education Policy (2003), the others indicated that the approach to religion in general and, in the classroom in particular, had not changed since the introduction of the Religion and Education Policy (2003). Respondent A3 said: *No, we as a school decided that we would rather leave the religion part out of LO because we are unhappy about it, as it influences our beliefs as a school.*

**e. Synthesis and interpretation of responses: School A self-administered questionnaires**

A total of 73% of the respondents were female and under the age of 30. Some 66% had less than five years' teaching experience and 73% of the respondents had taught at School A for less than five years. Governing body posts were held by 64% of respondents. It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents would not have taught in the pre-1994 education dispensation. The respondents all claimed to be practising Christians. These statistics support comments made informally by the principal that the SGB and SMT recruit teachers that they feel will adhere to the school's Christian ethos. These appointments are easier to make if they are governing body posts. There is also, according to informal discussion, an active drive to recruit younger teachers who can be 'moulded' into the school ethos.

From the analysed data it was clear that School A had not made the change required by the Religion and Education Policy (2003) and that it had entrenched a distinctly Christian ethos. This was particularly evident in the Christian assemblies which were attended by all the learners in the school, irrespective of their religious persuasion. The school's understanding of 'religious freedom' extended to maintaining a Christian ethos, while respecting individual learners who belonged to other religious groups. *We ... promote a Christian ethos ... at the same time, we will teach ... respect for the beliefs of others* (clause 2b of the School Code of Conduct) (cf. 4.3.1. & 4.3.1.1.).

The respondents seemed to understand the concept of human rights, and more specifically the human right to 'religious freedom', and defined this as everyone having the right to practise the religion of their choice without being intimidated or influenced by others. Yet there was little application within the school. One respondent said that it was *safer* to keep quiet (possibly to keep his/her job) because the only voice that would be heard was that of a Christian (respondents A7 & A9). The same respondent described the school ethos as compromising the beliefs of those adhering to other religions and that there was no 'religious freedom' in the school. It would appear that this school pays lip service to the constitutional right to 'religious freedom' but in practice tries to maintain a mono-religious ethos and approach to education in the school (4.4.1.1.d.i.). Respondent A1 claimed that the school

interpreted 'religious freedom' as respecting the beliefs of others, but respondent A3 qualified this by saying that in reality, no space or time was given to other religions.

The teachers seemed confused about the concept 'multireligion', some considering it to mean a type of combination of religions. Others understood the concept well. All the respondents were in agreement that it would be possible to learn from those who practised another religion. There was general agreement that if teachers understood 'religious freedom' they would be less likely to stereotype those of other religions, and to enforce their religion on others. The question could then be asked why there was such a fear to adopt a multireligion approach. If the term multireligion is interrogated and clarified, the teachers' misconceptions can be rectified and fear of change can be facilitated (cf. Roux, 2005a).

The difference between RE and Religious Instruction was also understood and yet the school had decided that because Christianity was the hegemonic religion, RE, which according to the Religion and Education Policy (2003) should adopt a multireligion approach, would be excluded from the LO programme. It was clear that this policy was seen as a threat to the Christian ethos of the school. Two respondents said that they discussed culture and religion openly with the learners and that in LO learners were taught about different religions. This was contradictory to what the other respondents had said. It would seem as if individual teachers had decided to disregard the SMT decision with regard to removing RE from the LO programme, and to adopt a multireligion approach in facilitating RE lessons. These teachers demonstrated individual agency in a context of structural determinism (cf. Beck (in Adams, 2003)). There was also no suggestion that this multireligion approach had caused offence to the learners of the religions represented in those classes.

Looking at the biographical data, it was evident that this group of respondents had also been influenced by the religion which formed part of their formative years, and that this religion had impacted upon the shaping of their religious identity. Two respondents questioned the practices of their parents' religion and had subsequently converted to Christianity. The other respondents had all embraced their parents' Christian religion. The religion practised by the respondents influenced their view of 'religious freedom' and there was a commitment to what they believed, and a desire to maintain and promote this.

#### 4.4.1.2. School B

##### a. Religious biographical information (Questions 12 - 15)

**Table 4.2: Summary of religion and denominations practised by respondents' parents**

	Christian: Catholic	Christian: Protestant	AIC: Zionist <sup>87</sup>	No religion	No answer
N=13	3	6	1	1	1

The majority of the respondents indicated that their parents' religion had influenced them during their formative years and that this influence was positive. These were some of the responses:

*... because it made me the person I am today (respondent B2).*

*... teach me respect for God and other people, the right way to grow without involvement in any bad behaviour. They taught me to respect other people, them and myself brought me where I am today (respondent B11).*

*I strongly believe in my parents so whatever they do mould me to be like them so I am a Catholic like they are (respondent B6).*

Respondent B5 said that the influence was negative: *... my parents used to mix Christianity and they also believe in ancestors. Its use to confuse me worshipping ancestors and worshipping God.*

Some respondents had no earliest recollections of any belief system. Others wrote of going to church, being forced to pray at bedtime and early in the morning (respondent B5), while respondent B12 remembered being a *chorister* (member of the church choir) and a *member of SCM*<sup>88</sup>. Respondent B7 recollected the emphasis on respecting adults. The focus on *African traditions* was recalled by respondent B8 who grew up in a community that practised Traditional Religion, although his/her parents did not actually practise any religion. Respondent B4 (Zionist) remembered *baptism*. Half of the respondents indicated that they embraced the religion they currently practise, when they were over the age of 17. Others

<sup>87</sup> Respondent B4: *it was formed by a group of Blacks who believed that God can be appreciated in many ways e.g. dancing, clapping of hands, etc.*

<sup>88</sup> SCM: Student Christian Movement.

embraced their religion in high school. Respondent B3 expressed his/herself in this way: *Since I knew and understood the Christianity it automatically embraced itself to me.* Respondent B11 said: *Since I was young I never disobey my religion. I grow up in a Christian family which influence/shape who I am now.*

## **b. Concept clarification**

### **i. Human rights (Question 16)**

The following responses were representative in defining the respondents' understanding of the concept of human rights:

- *... mostly it means what is good for me as a human being and for other people to respect and value each other positively (respondent B3).*
- *Everyone individual has a right to live the way he/she likes (respondent B5).*
- *Human rights is about equality (respondent B6).*
- *... to respect other people's decision and religious choices they believe in (respondent B11).*

### **ii. 'Religious freedom' (Question 17)**

The following responses indicated that for some respondents 'religious freedom' meant the freedom to practise their own religion, while for others it meant the freedom for everyone to follow the religion of their choice.

- *Each and everyone has a right to be a member of any religion as long as that does not disturb others (respondent B1).*
- *Everyone has a choice of religion (respondent B8).*
- *I think it means freedom of belief in religion of your choice without being discriminated (respondent B7).*
- *It means that you are free to talk about God and to preach his Word (respondent B10).*

### **iii. Multireligion (Question 18)**

The responses below indicate the teachers' understanding of this concept:

- *Different types of religion (respondent B13).*

- *Different religious groups worship together without looking down upon each other* (respondent B4).
- *Many religions in the same place* (respondent B9).

iv. Religion Education (RE) and Religious Instruction (Question 19)

The responses which follow demonstrated the understanding of RE, either as a process of teaching and learning about different religions, or relating back to CNE in some way.

- *... to learn about different religion across all nation beliefs* (respondent B3).
- *... to educate about different religions* (respondent B8).
- *... is when people are being taught about God through the Biblical Scriptures* (respondents B9 & B10).

The following responses relating to Religious Instruction demonstrated something of an understanding of 'instruction' or command in a particular or specific religion:

- *... to obey the rules and regulations of certain religions* (respondent B3).
- *... is about specific religion that need to be followed regardless of your own religion* (respondent B6).
- *... you are forced to believe in other people's religion* (respondent B7).

For respondents B10 and B12, by implication, RE only takes place when the Bible is used. Religious Instruction takes place *when people are taught religion without using the Bible*.

**c. Concept application**

i. Own religion and 'religious freedom' (Questions 20, 21 & 22)

When respondents were asked whether they thought that their religious affiliation affected the way in which they viewed human rights issues such as 'religious freedom', six teachers said 'yes' and six said 'no'. One did not answer the question. Those answering 'yes' responded as follows:

- *Yes, in many ways according to human rights a child has a right not to be beaten but the bible says a child must be punished* (respondent B5).
- *Yes, one can only say in words that everyone has a freedom to religion. Can you imagine in school if everyone during prayers is praying in his/her style of denomination.*

*There would be a conflict and everyone prefer his own religion as the best* (respondent B6).

Respondents B7 and B9 said 'no', because they felt that everyone had the right to choose what they wanted to believe.

Based on the previous question, the respondents were asked whether they felt threatened in upholding their own belief system, and/or felt like they had to compromise what they believed in order to accommodate 'religious freedom' in the school context. The majority response was that they did not feel threatened or compromised. These are some of the responses:

- *No I am a Christian and mostly its denominates to our community (black)* (respondent B1).
- *No because I am a Christian and Christian religion is dominating in most of us black community* (respondent B2).
- *No I'm happy with the religion environment I am around because they are all Christian. We believe in Lord Jesus Christ uniformly* (respondent B3).
- *No, the school accommodates religious freedom. The school caters for all religions. Learners are taught about various religions and that all are important as they worship only one God* (respondent B7).

Respondent B9 interpreted 'religious freedom' as the freedom for the prevailing religion in the school to dominate: *because if I wish to practise my belief I'm not feel free*. The response from respondent B6 supports this. Respondent B6 did not feel comprised as a Catholic, but observed that *the other religions are not fully considered*.

The majority of respondents indicated that they thought it was possible to learn from the beliefs and practices of other religions without compromising their own religious beliefs.

Some of the responses were as follows:

- *Yes there are good things about other religions* (respondent B5).
- *Yes everyone must learn other people's beliefs* (respondent B9).
- *Yes it is possible as long as we are praising the very same God* (respondent B7).

Respondent B6 felt differently: *It is impossible once you involve in practising other religion automatically it affects your own religious beliefs*.

ii. Voice (Questions 24 & 27)

These two questions required respondents to consider how the way in which they voiced their understanding of 'religious freedom' might impact on a 'whole school' ethos and their teaching in the classroom. Secondly they had to consider whether or not they felt like they actually did have a voice that was being heard in respect of religious matters within the school context.

Respondent B1 suggested that the way in which teachers voice their understanding of 'religious freedom' could *bring about respect for different religions*.

Other responses were the following:

- *It can have an impact if we all believe in Christianity* (respondent B5).
- *Since in the morning everybody attend prayers and everybody is compelled to do so. The whole school listened to one teacher who is conducting prayers who follow Catholic ethos* (respondent B6).
- *Children need to know about God* (respondent B10).
- *Classroom teaching should accommodate every individual learner and educator and school vision has religious freedom* (respondent B11).
- *As school is one body so ONE agreement should be reached and that enhance the ethos and teaching in the classroom* (respondent B13).

The majority of respondents said that in respect of religious matters they felt as if they had a voice that was being heard. In support of this, respondents commented as follows:

- *Yes, educators conduct morning assembly and give advice to the learners* (respondent B1).
- *Yes because educators are free to say what they feel like saying in the morning assembly* (respondent B2).
- *Yes assembly is conducted because you have a right to say what you learners to learn* (respondent B8).
- *Yes if there is something I want to share I'm allowed to do so* (respondent B13).
- *Yes, we all have a say in God's work promotion* (respondent B13). Respondent B6 felt that his/her voice was not heard *because everyone follow the catholic ethos*.

**d. Contextual information**

i. 'Religious freedom' in the school context (Questions 25, 26, 28 & 31)

With the exception of one nil return in this category, all the respondents agreed that religion was valued in the school. The following responses were an indication of this:

- *Yes because there are morning devotion 5 days a week* (respondent B2).
- *Yes, we do celebrate and observe days like Ascension days* (respondent B6).

The following responses represented half of the respondents who indicated that 'religious freedom' was not promoted in the school.

- *No because only Christian religion is practised* (respondent B2).
- *No we only practise Christianity since the school belongs to the Roman Catholic Church* (respondent B5).
- *I would say no because there are people who are African Christians but their religious freedom are not taken into consideration* (respondent B11).

Those that said that 'religious freedom' was promoted in the school said so because *people in this school have different religions* (respondents B9). Two respondents said that there was not a dominant religion in the school, giving the following reasons for this response:

- *No because we use different types of people who come and share with us word of God* (respondent B9).
- *Yes, it was so but as many teachers came in from different congregations it was not easy to allow that religion to dominate* (respondent B7).

The majority identified Christianity, and in some cases more specifically, Catholicism, as the dominant denomination.

Respondent B1 endorsed this: *Yes, one religion (denomination) is promoted just because more learners are from that religion so others are neglected because they are few members from different religions.*

In reply to the question asking them if they knew what the school policy was on 'religious freedom', three respondents said 'no', without substantiating their answer. The others said 'yes', and gave the following reasons:

- *Yes, all learners are given a chance to practise their religion* (respondent B8).
- *Yes, everyone respect one's freedom of religion* (respondent B13).

ii. Religion Education (Question 29)

The majority of respondents said that the value of RE as an integral part of LO was recognized by the school. To substantiate this, the following responses were given:

- *Yes school has organized people from outside (CIE and VFC) to build learners characters to teach them spiritually, physically etc.* (respondent B7).
- *Yes it is - it mould the child when he/she is growing up* (respondent B10).
- *Yes, LO promotes the values of religion* (respondent B13).

Those saying 'no' suggested that nothing was being said about other religions (respondent B1) and also that *our kids doesn't learn RE as subject but they are taught the word of God* (respondent B9).

iii. School assemblies (Question 30)

On this issue the unanimous response was that there was a definite religious component to school assemblies. They were run by teachers and they were Christian in nature.

The following were some of the responses:

- *We do have an assembly every morning Mon-Sat each and every teacher delivers the word of God the way suit the learners' age group* (respondent B3).
- *Every morning learners assemble in the quad to give thanks to God who saves their lives* (respondent B11).
- *Yes, every educator and learner has a right to talk about the word of God* (respondent B12).
- *Yes, every individual religion is addressed collectively* (respondent B13).

iv. Religion in school after 2003 (Question 32)

Responses as to whether or not the school approach to religion in general, and in the classroom in particular, had changed since the introduction of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) are presented below:

No answer: 3; Not sure: 2; No: 4; and Yes: 4: *We adhere 100% to the policy* (respondents B12 & B13).

**e. Synthesis and interpretation of responses: School B self-administered questionnaires**

Some 77% of the respondents were female, 62% fell into the 30 – 40 years age bracket, 54% had more than ten years' teaching experience, and 62% of the respondents had taught at School B for more than five years. All the respondents held government teaching posts. It is interesting to note that approximately half of the respondents could possibly have taught in the pre- and post-1994 education dispensations, and could have been exposed to curriculum change. Of the 100% that claimed to be Christian, 85% said that they actively practised their religion.

This school interpreted 'religious freedom' as the freedom to follow the Christian religion. Respondents referred to 'denominations' as synonymous with 'religions'. The school was considered to have a policy of 'religious freedom', because different denominations were represented in the school. 'Religious freedom' was viewed within the parameters of Christianity. The dominant denomination in the school was Catholicism.

Respondents did not feel threatened by other denominations and indicated that it was possible to learn from the other denominations, because they all worshipped the same Christian God. Having a voice with regard to religion in the school was considered in terms of teachers having the freedom to pray and preach about Christianity, and especially Catholicism, at the daily Christian assemblies. One respondent felt that his/her voice was not being heard, because the Catholic ethos was so dominant and he/she was a Protestant. The respondent belonging to the AIC, Shembe, felt that his/her religion was not taken into consideration (4.3.2.).

The perception that religion was valued in the school was determined by the daily prayers that took place. The concept 'multireligion' was understood to be different Christian denominations in the same place. There was no mention of a teaching approach or ethos that included more than one religion (as opposed to denomination). RE was considered to be about different denominations, whereas Religious Instruction was understood by the majority to mean instruction on how to live in a particular denomination.

RE as part of LO was considered to have value, but took the form of life skills or Bible teaching and did not meet the learning outcomes of LO as related to the social development of the learner<sup>89</sup>, namely to prepare and equip learners for a multireligion society (RNCS, 2003).

Although the school principal said he had not seen the Religion and Education Policy (2003) (4.3.2.), and although the school did not have a formal written policy on religion, four respondents said that the school adhered to such a policy and that, by implication, there had been a change in the religious ethos of the school since 2003. This was clearly not the case. Possibly the respondents were trying to protect the SMT and to promote a positive image of the school as complying with DoE policy.

It was evident that the respondents at School B were substantially influenced by their parents' religion, and that they were following in the religious 'footsteps' of their parents. Without exception, the respondents' understanding of religion was limited to different Christian denominations (these denominations included the AICs) and there was no evidence to suggest that any religion other than 'Christianity' would be considered in the school curriculum.

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<sup>89</sup> LO Learning Outcome 2: *The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions* (RNCS:LO, 2003).

It needs to be noted that there had possibly been consultation with regard to the responses to the questionnaire. In several instances the responses given by respondents B1 and B2 and respondents B10 and B12 were the same.

#### 4.4.1.3. School C

##### a. Religious biographical information (Questions 12 - 15)

Of the eight respondents, two indicated that their parents' religion was Christian, while six indicated that they were raised in Hindu homes. The majority of the respondents said that their parents' religion did influence them, as can be seen from the following responses:

- *My parent's religion had a great influence on me. Because my parents were Hindi speaking I grew up in a home being rooted in Hinduism, this allowed me to find myself and where I come from (respondent C4).*
- *Parents were Hindu. Yes parents did have an influence but I choose to practise Hinduism after learning about other religions (respondent C5).*
- *I learnt to live along the righteous path through them (respondent C6).*
- *I grew up steeped in Hindu traditions and culture and religion (respondent C8).*

The respondents said that the influence was positive because:

- *I learnt strict moral values (respondent C3).*
- *...it has shaped me to have the ability to know where I come from and be open to understand and respect other religions (respondent C4).*
- *... very positive - the prayer leaves one refreshed with feeling of peace and harmony. It was also a great social event-met relatives and friends-great camaraderie (respondent C5).*

Earliest recollections among the students whose parents were Hindus included:

- *Prayer and fasting (abstaining from meat) (respondent C3).*
- *The practice of prayer, where we as a family would visit a place of worship, in this case being the temple (respondent C4).*
- *Recollections of the festival of Diwali (respondent C5).*
- *... family, community 'Satsangs' or 'Bhajans', groups singing religious songs, colourful fun festivals (respondent C8).*

Three respondents embraced the religion they currently adhered to at a young age. Respondent C1 indicated that *it was decided upon by my parents and I did not question this belief*. Respondent C6 said: *I think it was due to the positive influence of my family*.

Two did so at University. Respondent C5 said this happened *during anthropology at university when he/she realized that all religions teach on the basic Ten Commandments*.<sup>90</sup>

## **b. Concept clarification**

### **i. Human rights (Question 16)**

The following responses are indicative of the respondents' understanding of the concept of human rights:

- *I understand human rights to be those basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. To violate someone's human rights is to treat that person as though she or he were not a human being* (respondent C4).
- *It is the right to treat another with dignity, respect and love, no matter what their beliefs, customs, race or ethnicity* (respondent C5).

### **ii. 'Religious freedom' (Question 17)**

The following responses are representative of the respondents' understanding of this concept:

- *Freedom to choose whatever religion you wish to follow* (respondent C1).
- *It's the freedom to practise your religion without being discriminated against* (respondent C4).
- *Feel free about your religion and respect other people's religions. We must accommodate each other* (respondent C7).

### **iii. Multireligion (Question18)**

This concept was defined by respondents in the following terms:

- *Belonging to many religious groups* (respondent C1).
- *Practice of many religions* (respondent C2).
- *A person embracing many religious beliefs to formulate his own – universal - religion* (respondent C5).

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<sup>90</sup> It is interesting to note that this respondent, a practising Hindu, made reference to a Judeo-Christian code as opposed to, for example, universal human rights or a code contained in his/her own religion.

- *Accepting many religious in an institution e.g. school* (respondent C3).

iv. Religion Education (RE) and Religious Instruction (Question 19)

These concepts were understood by the respondents as follows:

RE was understood as *the teaching of the different religions* (respondent C1) and as *what we learn at school* (respondent C6).

Religious Instruction *is to learn everything about a particular religion so as to belong to that religious group* (respondent C1) and *it is what we learn/practise at home* (respondent C6).

Respondent C7 regarded RE and Religious Instruction as *one and the same thing*.

c. **Concept application**

i. Own religion and 'religious freedom' (Questions 20, 21 & 22)

When asked whether respondents thought that their religious affiliation affected the way in which they viewed human rights issues such as 'religious freedom', one respondent failed to respond, while six said 'yes' and one said 'no', the latter failing to substantiate this response.

Those saying 'yes' elaborated as follows:

- *It does. My religious affiliation does not condemn other religions. People are free to fellowship with us without being forced to join the faith* (respondent C1).
- *Yes, I would give consideration to the reaction (respect) that I get from others about my religion. I expect the freedom to practise my own religion* (respondent C3).
- *I would think so, Hinduism embraces all irrespective of race, sender, colour, it shows love and respect for all* (respondent C4).
- *Yes, I believe that we should respect all religions as equal. Our superior says: "He is have to make a Hindu a stronger Hindu, Christian a stronger Christian etc."* (respondent C7).
- *Yes, Hindus are absolutely tolerant of issues such as these* (respondent C8).

Respondents were asked whether they felt threatened in their own belief system and/or felt like they had to compromise what they believed, in order to accommodate 'religious freedom'

in the school context. The respondents were unanimous in their response that they did not feel threatened or compromised.

Some of the responses were as follows:

- *No, my belief is firm and I feel very secure therefore there is no problem to teach religious freedom in school (respondent C1).*
- *No I don't, an educator can teach children about different religions without being confined to one belief system (respondent C4).*
- *No one can teach learners about the different belief systems without practising it oneself. The learner chooses for himself (respondent C5).*
- *No, I am comfortable with my religion and I am a firm believer that there is only one religion, the religion of love. There is only one race, the race of humanity (respondent C6).*
- *No I am comfortable in my belief. It works for me I will never compromise it. I was lucky to see God working strategically in my life (respondent C7).*
- *No, in our school we have total religious freedom and respect all religions (respondent C8).*

With one exception, the respondents said that they thought it possible to learn from the beliefs and practices of other religions without compromising their own religious beliefs.

The responses given were as follows:

- *Yes, it is possible. Enculturation<sup>91</sup> is important. You learn to understand other better (respondent C1).*
- *Yes, learning about other religions helps to broaden my own views. I can also compare and contrast (respondent C3).*
- *Yes it is possible. Many people may not practise certain rituals but will understand it (respondent C4).*
- *Yes, all religions have the same goals/aims which is to lead a better life and there is always things to be learnt which can benefit us as individuals (respondent C6).*
- *Yes, to the extent that it is something positive and good (respondent C8).*

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<sup>91</sup> According to Roux (2005b:64), enculturation can be defined as *the process whereby specific characteristics of a culture are adopted.*

Respondent C7 answered in the negative with the following response: *No, stay in your belief or in your religions, and worship faithfully. God will respond in your situation where you are.*

ii. Voice (Questions 24 & 27)

Respondent C1 suggested that the way teachers voice their understanding of 'religious freedom' *may propagate their own religion to the detriment of the pupil's religion.* Other teachers responded by noting that *you can help learners to respect other religious beliefs and practices* (respondent C3) and that *if we as teachers can accept all religions then we should be able to pass this on to our learners* (respondent C6). Respondent C8 added to this suggesting that *one can deepen the learners' faith and belief in their own religions, at the same time teaching them to respect other religions.*

Three of the eight respondents said that they felt their voice was being heard:

- *Yes I do-our suggestions are implemented if they are valid* (respondent C1).
- *Yes I believe we do, we don't have much of a problem with it as an issue, but if we want or believe in something we take a stand* (respondent C4).
- *We have freedom of religion in our school. Religion is not a major issue* (respondent C5).

Of the respondents that said that they did not feel that their voice was being heard, only respondent C7 gave a reason, saying that *that would be promoting my own religion and other children can report that in their homes.*

**d. Contextual information**

i. 'Religious freedom' in the school context (Questions 25, 26, 28 & 31)

With regard to religion being valued in the school, respondents gave the following responses:

- *Religious holidays and events are highlighted at school* (respondent C2).
- *All religious holidays are treated with respect* (respondent C5).
- *The school tries to practise basic values which are expected from the various religions* (respondent C6).
- *Every major 'holy' day or festival, irrespective of which religion it is, is celebrated or acknowledged* (respondent C8).

With two exceptions respondents agreed that 'religious freedom' was promoted in the school. This was supported by the following responses:

- *Yes we respect all religions* (respondent C3).
- *It is promoted as we are free to express our views and children are enthusiastic about learning about different religions* (respondent C4).
- *Yes, the murals on our walls reflect the various faiths of our country* (respondent C6).

Respondent C7 who responded in the negative noted that *no religion is promoted here. We avoid this because other religions are more than others .i.e. we have more Christians.*

Half of the eight respondents agreed that Christianity was the dominant religion in the school. Respondent C6 expressed this as follows: *Christianity is the dominant religion and I am fine with it. The majority of our kids are black and belong to the Christian faith.*

The other half of the respondents were represented by the response from respondent C7, who said that *there are different religions and are all treated the same or given fair share i.e. the school consider all religious holidays in the calendar.*

Four of the eight respondents said that they were aware of the school policy on 'religious freedom' in which *all sectors are given priority* (respondent C1). Respondent C5 said: *Our school is an 'a-religious' (sic) school – it allows freedom of all religions.*

#### ii. Religion Education (Question 29)

Seven of the eight respondents said that the purpose and value of RE as part of LO was recognized by the school.

- *Yes, this aspect is taught by the LO teachers* (respondent C3).
- *Yes, our learning outcome outlines the teachings of all religions to be made available to learners* (respondent C5).

#### iii. School assemblies (Question 30)

Respondent C7 represented the majority of respondents, saying that there was no religious component to school assemblies: *we only greet and say announcements, discipline. Lastly we sing the national anthem once a week.*

Those saying 'yes' supported their answer stating that *we read a prayer in the mornings in assembly or in class* (respondent C6) and that *on important days (or days preceding) such as*

*Diwali, Eid, or Christmas we have talks, and items etc. are presented at assembly* (respondent C8).

iv. Religion in school after 2003 (Question 31)

Responses as to whether or not the school approach to religion in general, and in the classroom in particular, had changed since the introduction of the Religion and Education policy (2003) were as follows:

No answer: 4

Yes: 1, respondent C6: *Yes, learners seem more interested in learning about other religions.*

No: 4 as represented by the response from respondent C5: *The Education policy has no impact in our school as our school does not educate through the medium of religion.*

**e. Synthesis and interpretation of responses: School C self-administered questionnaires**

Some 75% of the respondents were female, over the age of 40, and had been teaching for more than ten years, holding government posts. A total of 88% of the respondents had been teaching at School C for less than five years. Although fairly new at School C, the majority of respondents had a fair amount of teaching experience and would have taught in the pre- and post-1994 education dispensations and experienced curriculum change in education.

The respondents, one Muslim, five Hindus and two Christians, all identified Christianity as the numerically dominant religion in the school<sup>92</sup>. They were all greatly influenced by their parents' religion which the majority of them fully embraced and adhered to.

The respondents had a good understanding of the concepts 'human rights', 'religious freedom' and the difference between RE and Religious Instruction. 'Multireligion' was understood by some to be a combination of different religions, or as people simultaneously belonging to more than one religion.

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<sup>92</sup> 'Christianity' possibly included members of the AICs.

The Hindu respondents, especially, did not feel threatened or compromised in their own religion by promoting 'religious freedom', believing that they could learn from others. The Muslim respondent expressed frustration at not being able to go to prayer at midday on Fridays. The inference was that if the school genuinely embraced a multireligion approach, an arrangement should have been made to accommodate the Friday prayer time for Muslims. Although the school promotes 'religious freedom', it adopts a 'neutral stand', not favouring any particular religion. Accommodating the Friday prayer time could perhaps have been interpreted as favouring the rituals of Islam in some way.

Religion was considered to have value in the school and evidence of this was the fact that all the religious holidays were celebrated. There was no religious component to school assemblies per se, but sometimes the school prayer was said (cf. 4.3.3.). 'Religious freedom' was promoted and all religions were respected and treated equitably. There was a very tolerant approach to adherents of other religions. The Hindu respondents claimed that their religious affiliation impacted on the way in which they viewed 'religious freedom', because Hindus were not condemning of other religions. The respondents were aware of the school policy on religion, and the purpose and value of RE as part of LO was acknowledged.

Respondents felt that by 'voicing' their understanding of 'religious freedom', they could help their learners to respect other religious beliefs, as well as voice their own beliefs. They said that their voice on religious matters was being heard in the school, and one respondent said that he/she needed to be careful not to promote his/her own religion, as this would gainsay the multireligion approach adopted by the school. There was a lack of clarity with regard to the impact that the Religion and Education Policy (2003) had had on the school's approach to religion post 2003.

#### **4.4.2. General conclusions**

It was apparent that there was considerable variation in the teachers' understanding and interpretation of the concept of 'religious freedom'. By and large teachers were influenced by their parents' religion and, with some exception, this became the religion that they embraced and which formed their 'religious identity'. The analysis and interpretation of the data indicated that teachers' religious biography had influenced the way in which they

understood 'religious freedom'. Moreover, the voice given to this understanding was not only dependent on each respondent's biography, but also on the school context in which they found themselves (cf. 4.5.2.)

Principals were implementing the Religion and Education Policy (2003) as they chose. There was, therefore, considerable variation in what was experienced by teachers and learners in their schools. In the case of Schools A and B there was a very dominant religious ethos in the school, and thus individual agency in terms of practising a different religion, or 'voicing' 'religious freedom' as it is defined in Section 2.3.1., was subjugated.

#### 4.5. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

##### 4.5.1. Analysis, interpretation and discussion of semi-structured interviews

According to Terre Blanche & Durrheim (2002:128) *conducting an interview is a natural form of interacting with people and fits in well with the interpretive approach*. It is considered as a means of finding out how people really feel about or experience particular situations or circumstances. In the previous chapter (3.4.2.) the significance of semi-structured interviews applicable to this study was discussed.

According to Wengraf (2001:222) any representation of an interview interaction would be less complex and more selective/simplified than the event itself, while with the transcription from an audio recording to written text yet further information is lost. Transcription *involves complex decisions, as mediation occurs between the speakers and the eventual readers of transcribed words in any published report* (ibid.). The transcript becomes the main source for analyses and interpretations. Wengraf therefore stresses the importance of instant session de-briefing notes after each interview, which he says could go some way to a partial remedying of data loss.

Kvale (1996:203) suggests that *the most frequent form of interview analysis is probably ad hoc use of different approaches and techniques for meaning generation*. The researcher read the interview material (IM), gained an overall impression and then revisited specific passages, to bring out connections and structures significant to the research project. The IM was coded using Wengraf's (2001) approach to cluster material. Patterns and themes were noted and contrasts and comparisons made, as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994:245 - 246), for

generating meaning in qualitative texts. Continual coding and recoding of data took place during the interrogation of IM.

Wengraf (2001:224 - 225) employs a top-down approach to interview analysis. He works from Research Purposes (RP)<sup>93</sup> to Central Research Question (CRQ)<sup>94</sup> to a number of Theory Questions (TQs)<sup>95</sup> that spell out the CRQ and then from each TQ to a number of Interview Questions (IQs)<sup>96</sup>, a procedure which is anticipated to produce the appropriate material for analysis. This could be expressed as follows:

RP→CRQ→TQs→IQs

After the interview has taken place, the researcher collects the Interview Material (IM) that has been produced and which is relevant to particular TQs. These are then analysed to answer each TQ. All the answers to each TQ are then considered simultaneously in order to produce a unified answer to the original CRQ. Put succinctly, one ends up with the following sequencing:

IM→ATQs (Answer to TQs) → ACRQ (Answer to CRQ)

Wengraf (2001:226) points out that *much of the material for answering a particular TQ should be found around the IQs designed for that TQ*, but also that *much may be found elsewhere*. All parts of the IM will need to be examined in order to ensure that IM relevant for answering a particular TQ has not been overlooked. He argues *for a framework/strategy of re/presentation which clearly distinguished the voices engaged in the dialogues that have produced the...‘findings’* (Wengraf, 2001:311). He also points out that direct quotation is a distinguishing feature of ethnographic writing. In coding the interview transcripts the researcher followed this approach and coded the relevant material for TQ1, 2 and 3.

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<sup>93</sup> Research Purpose (RP): to investigate how teachers in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools construct their understanding of the human right to ‘religious freedom’.

<sup>94</sup> Central Research Question (CRQ): *How do teachers in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools construct their understanding of the right to ‘religious freedom’?*

<sup>95</sup> Theory Questions (TQs): TQ1: *How does the selected group of teachers voice their understanding of the human right to ‘religious freedom’?* TQ2. *How does their biography impact on this understanding?* TQ3. *How does the school context in which teachers operate, influence their understanding of ‘religious freedom’?*

<sup>96</sup> Interview Questions (IQs) are recorded in Appendix F.

The teachers interviewed were all Grade 6 LO teachers. Eight teachers were interviewed: four in School A, one in School B and three in School C, this according to the division of labour in each school. As opposed to a focus-group interview (as anticipated by the researcher after consultation with the principal), the semi-structured interview conducted at School B resulted in an individual interview as the school only has one teacher who facilitated Grade 6 LO together with the local NCMI-church which facilitated one of the Grade 6 LO lessons per week (cf. 4.3.2.). Her response was, however, included in this section.

In all three schools the purpose of the interview was explained to the respondents and they were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The respondents signed a 'Consent to participate in research' form (Appendix C) and this was co-signed by the researcher (cf. 3.4.). Agreement was also reached that the interview could be digitally recorded using a digital wave player. In each case a 'sound check' preceded the actual interview.

In each interview the interviewer tried to establish a rapport with those being interviewed in order to eliminate possible fear and anxiety. She was friendly and relaxed and tried to make the respondents feel at ease, showing a genuine interest in their responses. There were occasions when the interviewer redirected or rephrased questions in the interests of clarification. The interviewer facilitated the conversation for the whole group in the case of Schools A and C and also kept notes, noting body language and interaction (where appropriate) between members of the focus group.

The following domains, expressed as TQs, were identified for the purpose of a sound presentation of interview data (cf. 1.4. & 1.5.).

TQ1: How do the selected teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

TQ2: How does their biographical context impact on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

TQ3: How does the school context in which teachers operate, influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?

Appendices G, H and I, provide an overview of the respondents' responses during interviews. Although it appeared as if questions were structured, the interviews were undertaken in a less structured manner. The interviews were conducted in English, which was the first language for the majority of respondents. All the teachers were teaching through the medium of English in their respective schools, and as they had also completed their tertiary education in English, the researcher did not deem it necessary to conduct the interviews in any other language. No language editing was done with the responses. Certain concepts were explained to the respondents before and during the interviews. These concepts included: religious affiliation, facilitation and collaboration. If unfamiliar concepts were used, respondents were asked to stop the researcher in order to gain clarification.

#### **4.5.1.1. School A**

The focus-group interview in School A took place in the school library. The school was closed to learners because of the National Strikes (cf. 5.5.2.) and the teachers had come to work to 'sign in'. The setting was relaxed and the interview took place over refreshments and cake provided by the interviewer. The respondents, two white teachers, one Indian teacher and one black teacher, were all female. They were comfortable with one another and at no stage during the interview was there any tension. The respondents responded to the questions and interjected and contributed freely to the discussion. They were enthusiastic about the research and willing to participate.

The researcher is referred to as 'JJ' and the respondents are 'L', 'S', 'A1' and 'A2' (Appendix G).

There was no rush for the teachers to return to class<sup>97</sup> and they were very keen to pursue the issues raised in the interview, so a lengthy discussion followed in which the researcher engaged with the teachers and discussed some of the fears and the obvious discomfort that was expressed (4.5.1.1.a.).

#### **4.5.1.1.a. Synthesis and interpretation of responses: School A semi-structured interview**

ATQ1: How do the selected teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

<sup>97</sup> The school was closed to learners because of the National Strike (cf. Section 5.6.2.).

The teachers who were interviewed were aware of, and able to name, the range of religions represented in South Africa. This suggested that they had some knowledge of the religious diversity which prevailed in the country. They seemed to have an understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' as constituting the right of each citizen to decide for him/herself what they wished to believe. Some respondents described 'religious freedom' as important, because it gave the opportunity for Christianity to be considered in schools where this might not have been the case. Other responses included the importance of promoting 'religious freedom' for the following reasons: it gave people the opportunity to be comfortable with the choices they and others make; it obviated a biased outlook or approach to the teaching and learning about religion; and learning about other religions informed and equipped teachers to teach in a context of religious diversity.

The conversation between members of the focus group raised the dichotomy between those teachers who said that they were Christians and who refused to teach about any other religion, and those who were also Christians but expressed the need to show respect for other beliefs and to engage in teaching and learning about other religions. RE was considered preferable to Religious Instruction which was viewed as 'indoctrination'. The respondents spoke as if they were facilitating RE as part of LO. One respondent explained how this had helped the learners to understand each other better and to stop labelling one another with religious stereotypical language.

ATQ2: How does the teacher's biographical context impact on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

One of the respondents grew up in a home which mixed Christianity and Traditional African Religion. She found this confusing and felt that learning about different religions helped her to choose the religion she now embraced. Another respondent grew up in a home in which her parents' religion was initially Hinduism, then Christian Pentecostalism and even later, Catholicism. The exposure to different religions and denominations during her formative years helped her to have respect for other religions and to understand the human right to 'religious freedom'. By contrast, respondent A2 indicated that she had never been exposed to other religions and was so comfortable in her religion that she did not want to find out about

other religions. It became apparent from other responses that an individual's religious identity affected his/her response in a multireligion context and that there is a need for caution in what is said so as not to offend those with a different belief (respondents L, S and A2). Some respondents felt out of their depth with religions other than their own.

Concern was expressed by respondent S, that as a Christian, she felt as if she should be continually promoting her faith amongst those who did not believe as she did. She felt that she would be compromising her faith position to a lesser degree if she was not compelled to follow the impartial stance required by government policy. In a similar vein another respondent felt a measure of confusion and discomfort, saying that she wouldn't want a Hindu prayer to be said in her class and yet she would be prepared to say the Christian 'Lord's Prayer'. She felt as if she had double standards, because she did not give her learners much 'religious freedom', and yet she was asking them to respect others' religious positions. She was in fact not practising what she was expecting of her learners. It would seem as if some Christian teachers in this school were beginning to feel uncomfortable with a confessional approach in a context of religious diversity. One respondent suggested that by requiring her learners to recite the 'Lord's Prayer' every day, she was in effect teaching her learners to be tolerant of her religion. Her learners would, however, not be allowed to recite the prayers from their own religion. This could be cited as an example of 'religious freedom' being interpreted as the freedom to practise the hegemonic religion. This stands in direct antithesis to the CRSA Bill of Rights (1996), and more specifically to the Policy on Religion and Education (2003).

Respondent A2 felt that her religion was being compromised, because she had to be guarded and could not speak as openly about it as she would want to. This raised the issue of having 'multiple identities' (cf. Giddens, 2000). In general teachers in this school felt that the best way of dealing with religious diversity in schools was to maintain their own position while being tolerant of, and sensitive to, other religious positions.

It would seem from the above that the teachers' biographical context does exert a bearing on how they currently view themselves and what they believe in, both as individuals and as practising teachers.

ATQ3: How does the school context in which teachers operate, influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?

Although the school is very clear about the Christian ethos it embraces, the respondents expressed the need to expose the children to other religions because of the existence of other religions in the school. One of the Christian respondents was emphatic in her approach to promote care, respect and tolerance amongst the children of different religions. While another respondent made the point that although the school had adopted a distinctly Christian ethos, it was, in the first instance, a government school. This response indicated that she seemed to be aware that the school was not adhering to government policy.

A staff development session was held soon after the Religion and Education Policy (2003) was disseminated, during which a summation of this policy was presented and explained by the SMT. Based on this presentation and the ensuing discussion on the Departmental Teachers' Guide for Religion Education, Grades 4 - 6 (2006), the decision was made to remove RE from the LO programme. None of the respondents had actually read the Policy on Religion and Education (2003). Their understanding of the Policy (2003) was influenced by the position adopted by the SMT. As far as school assemblies were concerned, according to one of the respondents, a decision was taken by the SMT that in the event of an instruction being received from the KZNDEC to adopt a multireligion approach, the school would simply remove religion altogether. Assemblies would then take the form of general meetings during which values in broad terms might from time to time be touched upon.

Taking into account that religion in the school had been structurally determined (Beck, in Adams, 2003) to be that of Christianity, the teachers interviewed spoke quite openly about the need to adopt a multireligion approach to education, which allows the learners to better understand and appreciate one another. However, for some, this would not be ushered in without difficulty and discomfort. It became apparent that the teachers struggle with 'multiple identities' (Bendle, 2002). They struggle with the tension between the religion which is part of their biography and lies at the core of their social identity (in all four cases this is the religion promoted by the school, thereby making it a comfortable experience to be teaching in a school of this nature), and the realization that in the interests of 'religious freedom', which they

espouse, in order to practise their own religion, they need to make a transition to a multireligion ethos that promotes 'religious freedom' for all in the school.

It became apparent in the informal discussion which took place after the semi-structured interview, and which was not recorded, that the presentation to the staff on the Religion and Education Policy (2003), mentioned above, in fact represented a particular Christian perspective, namely that of the Theocentric Christian Education Movement, Frontline Fellowship and United Christian Action<sup>98</sup>. These groups noted that the principal problem with the Policy (2003) is its *active promotion of a single set of values under the guise of tolerance* (Chidester, 2002b:5). These values were castigated as the basic elements of a New Age<sup>99</sup> 'religion' (sic). Based on this information, teachers became concerned that by adopting the new Religion and Education policy (2003) and by facilitating RE as part of LO, the exclusive nature of their Christian faith would be compromised and threatened. The researcher took time to explain the rationale behind the Religion and Education Policy (2003), namely that it adopts a co-operative model in which 'unity' but not 'uniformity', 'diversity' but not 'divisiveness' is encouraged. The researcher was asked to return at a later date to facilitate a workshop for all staff members. The principal later endorsed this invitation.

#### **4.5.1.2. School B**

The anticipated focus-group interview in School B, as explained in Section 4.5.1., was in reality an individual interview between the researcher 'JJ' and 'Z', a black female teacher. This was as a result of a misunderstanding with the principal who indicated that there were more than one Grade 6 LO teachers. What he failed to communicate was that the teacher 'Z' was one and the others were members of the voluntary NCMI-church group who taught LO twice weekly.

The interview took place in a very small office shared by two Heads of Departments (HODs) who kindly made the space available for the interview. There were some interruptions by learners looking for the HODs, but the researcher and the respondent managed to

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<sup>98</sup> These groups represent organized Christian opposition to the Religion and Education Policy (2003).

<sup>99</sup> New Age 'religion' is interpreted by the Christian opposition groups as a religious blend of beliefs, practices and values taken from all religions (Chidester, 2002b: 5).

accommodate this and still proceed with the interview. Initially 'Z' was nervous and rather apprehensive and her body language was defensive. However, after chatting briefly before commencing with the interview, she was at ease and spoke more easily as the interview progressed (Appendix H).

#### **4.5.1.2.a. Synthesis and interpretation of responses: School B semi-structured interview**

ATQ1: How do the selected teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

The single respondent at this school defined 'religious freedom' as everyone being free to choose whichever religion he/she wanted. She expressed a reasonable awareness of the different religions represented in South Africa, and suggested that it is important to promote 'religious freedom' so as not to force the learners to belong to one denomination, because the learners become bored and disinterested at assembly devotions if they were not conducted through the medium of their particular denomination. She felt that living in a democratic country people had to be respectful of other denominations. Religious Instruction was seen as indoctrination and RE, which was described as Christian in nature, was regarded as the better choice. RE was described as that which took place during daily assemblies, as it played no part in the LO programme which focused mainly on Life Skills, which were taught from a Christian perspective.

Significantly the terms 'denomination' and 'religion' are here seen as being synonymous, this pointing to a flawed understanding of 'religious freedom'.

ATQ2: How does the teachers' biographical context impact on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

The respondent attended Sunday school as a child and, based on this, felt that it was easy for her to teach about her Christian denomination, because it was something she had experienced from childhood, but that if she had to teach about other religions she would have

to study again. Her responses indicated that she showed only some awareness of religions other than her own.

ATQ3: How does the school context in which teachers operate, influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?

As has been mentioned, this school started out as a Catholic missionary school. While it now falls under the auspices of the KZNDEC, a Catholic ethos is still present and has in fact, in many ways, become the dominant religious position in the school. The respondent was able to recognize that Catholicism was the hegemonic religion and that any deviation would not be tolerated by the SMT which received support from the CIE. While having an understanding of 'religious freedom' (ATQ1) she nevertheless seemed prepared to accept the status quo.

The respondent had not read the Policy on Religion and Education (2003). In saying that she thought the teachers would be prepared to implement the policy in order to give the learners the opportunity to learn about different religions, she was in fact referring only to Christianity and Shembe. As a government school, this school should receive support and assistance (obviously sorely needed in this particular case) from departmental authorities, but it became apparent that no such input had been received. In fact, the school had not even received the Policy (2003) document from the KZNDEC.

#### **4.5.1.3. School C**

The focus-group interview in School C took place during the mid-morning break in an available classroom. The setting was fairly relaxed and the respondents, two Indian females (respondents L1 & L2) and one Indian male (respondent M), were interested in the research and willing to participate. Respondent L1 was an older female teacher and tended to be quite forceful, and without the mediation of the interviewer (the researcher) may well have dominated the interview. Once again the researcher is referred to as 'JJ' (Appendix J).

There was a misunderstanding between the principal and the researcher who was under the impression that the respondents would be available for longer than just the break period.

Unfortunately this was not the case; the teachers were required to return to their classes and as a result IQs 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22 and 23 were not fully answered. The interview could also not continue at the end of the school day, because the school was closing early for a three-day period in order to allow the KZNDEC Works Department time to repair broken water and sewerage pipes in the school. Unfortunately, because of time constraints (on both sides), it was not possible to revisit this school.

#### **4.5.1.3.a. Synthesis and interpretation of responses: School C semi-structured interview**

ATQ1: How do the selected teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

The respondents were able to name most of the major religions represented in South Africa which indicated that they were aware of the religious diversity of the country. The respondents agreed that 'religious freedom' meant having respect for and treating other religions with as much respect and dignity as their own. There was a sense in which it was considered important to recognize that promoting 'religious freedom' should not mean losing contact with what individuals had grown up with. Being able to practise one's own religion freely was considered of the utmost importance. One respondent felt that a 'universal values' type of approach might be useful in avoiding friction in that individuals' religions might be offensive to each other. There was agreement that 'religious freedom' could be promoted through RE, but equally there was consensus that responsibility should accompany the focus on 'religious freedom' as a human right.

ATQ2: How does the teachers' biographical context impact on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?

The respondents all grew up in homes that respected religions other than their own. The Hindu respondents experienced a measure of Christianity and other faiths while growing up in a Hindu home. None felt threatened in their own faith by investigating and teaching about other religions.

ATQ3: How does the school context in which teachers operate, influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?

The school has adopted a multireligion approach to education, which is endorsed by the SGB and SMT. According to the respondents, RE is taught as part of LO. However, what is actually taught would seem not to differ substantially from 'values education', and this clearly does not fulfil the requirements of the Religion and Education Policy (2003). It emerged that 'religious freedom' is promoted in the school and supported by the staff, but understanding and implementation is very superficial.

#### **4.5.2. Final analysis and conclusion of the three schools**

Having used Wengraf's (2001) top-down approach to interview analysis: IM→ATQs (Answer to Theory Questions) → ACRQ (Answer to Critical Research Question), the following general conclusions addressed the ACRQ.

In the case of all eight respondents it was evident that their biographical context, which formed the core of their social identity, influenced the way in which they voiced their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'. In each case 'religious freedom' was defined in accordance with human rights values, but the practical effect of that voice was expressed differently, depending on their individual biography.

For the respondents in School C it meant religious tolerance and a multireligion approach to education. For the single respondent in School B it meant being able to explain her own Christian denomination to the learners. Although this teacher could identify different religions, she also confused 'religion' with 'denominations', and referred to learning about different 'religions', when in fact she meant different Christian 'denominations'. In School A, the respondents were comfortable teaching in an environment in which their faith was promoted, but definite discomfort was also evident with regard to the neglect of other religions represented in the school.

School C promoted 'religious freedom' for all religions. In School B, Catholicism was the hegemonic Christian denomination and although the respondent defined 'religious freedom' as the right to choose, this was not an option in this school. In School A 'religious freedom' was understood in two different ways. For some it was the freedom to practise their own Christian religion, but not any other religion. For others there was a notion that all religions needed to be included in some way. In the case of School A this would be very difficult, because of the institutional discrimination towards any religion other than Christianity. Some teachers felt uncomfortable with the tension between what they felt should be happening in terms of promoting a multireligion approach, and the unapologetically Christian ethos promoted by the school.

#### 4.6. TRIANGULATION OF SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRES, SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The notion of triangulation applicable to this research exercise was described in Section 3.3.5. The analysis, interpretations and discussions of the survey findings and, more specifically, the self-administered questionnaires and individual and focus group semi-structured interviews, suggested that the use of multiple methods is likely to validate data and confirm its reliability. The researcher endeavoured to leave an *audit trail* (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278) to lend authenticity and reliability to, conclusions, interpretations and recommendations (Chapter 5) which be traced to their sources. This audit trail included evidence of raw data, the digital recording of interviews, the transcripts thereof, the original completed self-administered questionnaires and the data reduction and analyses thereof. The synthesis and interpretation at the end of each section in this chapter could thus be traced back to the raw data. The literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2 provided part of the theoretical background for the interpretation of data. In this section the issues that have been identified will not be analysed again, but rather the triangulation of data endeavours to determine whether some responses given by respondents, along with perceptions of the researcher during observations, are indeed reliable.

There was consensus between all the respondents in all three schools that it was important for an individual to be able to practise his/her religion freely, and that everyone should be able to follow their religion of choice. These KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in-service teachers thus agreed

with their UKZN pre-service counterparts (Roux, Smith, Ferguson, Small, Du Preez & Jarvis, SANPAD research report, 2006). It was apparent that while there was agreement with regard to a cognitive understanding of 'religious freedom', however, the implementation thereof was understood differently. Although the majority of the teachers showed an understanding of the difference between RE and Religious Instruction, their practice did not demonstrate this understanding.

#### School A

Triangulation of the data collected in School A confirmed the researcher's perceptions that this school had an entrenched Christian ethos. The respondents in the school had been influenced by their biographical context, and this influenced the way in which they voiced the human right to 'religious freedom'. Their Christian biography and commitment to this religion defined 'religious freedom' as the freedom to practise Christianity. What was apparent, however, was the tension and discomfort that they experienced in a context of religious diversity. On the one hand there was the desire to promote Christianity and on the other, the recognition that other religions needed to be accommodated and respected.

School A had taken account of the Policy on Religion and Education (2003) and had decided to ignore, for as long as possible, the directive to adopt a multireligion approach to education. The dominant Christian ethos adopted by the school was not conducive to promoting an understanding of 'religious freedom', and a mono-religious, confessional approach was encouraged. The school ethos was such that teachers and learners of other religions were assimilated into the hegemonic religious ethos and there was no room for other religions to be practised. The principal indicated informally that it would have been preferable to have only Christians in the school. One respondent (A9) expressed this as unfair to non-Christian learners. Another respondent (A7) sensed that there was a fear on the part of some teachers that 'religious freedom' was evil.

As a result, RE as stated in the Religion and Education Policy (2003), was not promoted and was considered to be a sensitive issue. There seemed to be an unmotivated fear that by exposing learners to religions other than their own, they could possibly convert to those

religions<sup>100</sup>. If RE (as intended by the Policy (2003)), and not Religious Instruction was employed, then that fear should be allayed. School A particularly expressed the fear of ‘relativity’ of truth, saying that relativism ignores the question of *religious truth* (cf. Horn, 2006). School A demonstrated great resistance to the state ideology which required giving attention to religions other than Christianity. The school claimed to exercise tolerance which Horn (2006:30) described as meaning that *one should respect the right of others to have a different religion from one’s own* but in practice this did not translate into meaningful policy implementation.

The principal said that a staff decision had been made to *veer away from the religious aspect totally* with regard to RE as part of LO. There was an element of inconsistency in the data, however, as respondents in both the self-administered questionnaires and in the semi-structured focus-group interview said that in some instances learners were taught about different religions in RE. The researcher would suggest that a few of the teachers, recognizing the need for learners to better understand one another’s religions, have exercised agency and included a measure of RE with a multireligion approach, in their LO lessons. However, on the whole, RE as part of LO is not being dealt with *because it is a thorny issue* (respondent A7).

With regard to having a voice in the school expressing the need for ‘religious freedom’ for all religions, respondents confirmed the Christian hegemony in the school, saying that only a Christian voice would be heard (respondent A5) and that it was ‘safer’ to remain silent on this issue (respondent A7).

## School B

Triangulation of data in School B confirmed that once again the biographical context of the teachers played a role in how they voiced the human right to ‘religious freedom’. The majority of respondents, following the religion of their parents, had embraced Christianity. ‘Religious freedom’ was understood as being able to practise different ‘religions’ but the understanding

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<sup>100</sup> Section 4.3.1. *I would feel nervous* (principal speaking about the possibility of any group other than SU meeting at the school); Section 4.4.1.1.c.i. *people who are not Christian ... will be going to hell* (respondent A7), explains the desire for learners to adhere only to Christianity.

of 'religion' is synonymous with Christian 'denomination'. Catholicism was the hegemonic 'religion' in the school and, according to respondent B11, other 'religions' (denominations) were not fully considered. Respondent B2 emphasized this hegemony saying that he/she did not feel free to practise his/her belief and that 'religious freedom' meant the freedom to practise Christianity. Having a voice in the school with regard to 'religious freedom' meant speaking about Christianity. Respondent B6 said that he/she felt that his/her voice was not being heard, because everyone followed the Catholic ethos to which he/she did not adhere. The principal emphasized that with the exception of Catholicism and possibly Protestantism, other religions, like Shembe, for example, were not allowed to be practised in the school.

Any individual agency with regard to introducing a multireligion approach broader than Christian denominations would be very difficult. The physical needs of the school were stressed by the principal and reinforced by the respondents, one of whom teaches 165 learners in one LO class. There was no religious policy in the school, but the principal said that he had a team looking into the matter. Contrary to this, four respondents said that the school did have a policy which was fully adhered to. It can be posited that the principal and those particular respondents were perhaps trying to create the impression that the school was adhering to DoE requirements.

### School C

Triangulation of the data collected from School C indicated that the biographical context of the respondents certainly influenced the way in which they understand the human right to 'religious freedom'. All the respondents claimed that the religion that they embraced during their formative years taught them to regard all religions as equal, and to respect people who adhere to religions different from their own. The school had a religion policy which encouraged mutual respect and tolerance of all religions by all. Auspicious religious occasions are acknowledged and celebrated and all religions in the school had equal status. This multireligion approach was confirmed by respondents in the self-administered questionnaire and in the semi-structured focus-group interview. Religions were regarded as equal, but there was little educating about religion. It was surprising that the principal of a school, where the learner population was predominantly Christian, was confused about Christianity as a religion, and she openly admitted that she... *didn't know too much*. This lack

of knowledge about religions other than Hinduism became apparent in comments made by other respondents. As opposed to the notion that religion was promoted in the school, one respondent (C7) alluded to the fact that no religion was promoted, indicating that this was avoided, because Christianity was the dominant religion among the learners. Another respondent (C5) confirmed this, indicating that the school adopted a neutral stance, not promoting religion at all.

The principal was not sure who facilitated the RE component of LO, thinking (incorrectly, according to the LO teachers) that the eastern language teachers facilitated RE in the school. In facilitating RE as part of LO the teachers did not appear to have an organized work schedule, but just *made the* (learners) *aware that outside their religious beliefs there are others* (respondent L2). Although the school promoted 'religious freedom' and was thus positioned to facilitate RE in such a way as to provide the opportunity for learners to *know the significance of different belief systems for individuals* and the greater community (cf. Jackson, 1997:9), in practice very little substantial RE was taking place. Universal values, and not RE per se, was promoted in the school, one respondent (C5) claiming that the 10 commandments (sic) are basic to all religions<sup>101</sup>.

School C applied what Melchert (1995) called a postmodern approach, where the understanding of learners' own religious traditions was fostered without denying other traditions. The criticism of School C, however, is that the approach to religion, all-embracing as it was, was very shallow, which could lead to the *trivialization* (Cox, Burn & Hart, in Jackson, 1997:10) of religions. It was evident from the interview with the principal and from the responses in the questionnaire and focus group interview that the teachers themselves were not educated in religion, and that they were by and large versed in the religion which they had embraced in their formative years (biography), but knew very little about any other religions. Although there was no resistance to a multireligion approach, and 'religious freedom' was espoused in the school which adopted a neutral stand with regard to religion, the implementation of any RE took place on a very superficial level.

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<sup>101</sup> It became clear to the researcher that there was a measure of confusion with regard to religion in this school.

#### 4.7. CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2, which formed part of the theoretical background to the interpretation of the data (2.3.1. & 2.3.2.), showed that various understandings, reactions and approaches to religious inclusivity were prevalent. The data collected in this study corroborated this, but went further to demonstrate that the teachers' biographical context, along with the school context, influenced the way in which teachers constructed their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom', and the way in which they voiced this understanding. It could be concluded that in *general a multi-(religion) orientation correlates positively, and a mono-religious orientation negatively, with human rights attitudes* (Swanepoel, 2001:118).

Schools A and B had a mono-religious orientation and paid lip service to any articulation of the human right to 'religious freedom', and especially in the case of School B, there was no significant understanding of this specific human right. In both cases there was no desire to implement anything other than the status quo. However, in the case of School A the discomfort that some Christian teachers were experiencing, one of them being a member of the SMT, could well facilitate more debate on the issue of promoting 'religious freedom' in that school in the broader sense and in HRV-education.

In School B, if the physical needs of the school were met and were less of a pressing issue, policy matters such as those pertaining to religion and human rights could possibly begin to be addressed in a meaningful way. Although School C purported to promote 'religious freedom' by adopting a neutral stand and not promoting any specific religion, RE needed to be addressed more substantially.

It was the conclusion of the researcher that the data that had been collected, analysed, synthesized, interpreted and triangulated, were reliable and that the findings to be addressed in the next chapter were based on a sound theoretical and methodological foundation.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this empirical research exercise was to provide a defined insight into how selected teachers participating in this study construct their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom', and how they voice this understanding in a context of religious diversity in schools. Integral to the investigation was the interrogation of the influence of their biographical and school contexts in shaping their personal religious identity.

In this final chapter the focus will be on the following:

- an overview of the study (5.2.);
- an overview of the research findings (5.3.);
- a discussion on the self-reflection and reflexivity of the researcher (section 5.4.);
- recommendations based on the study which has been undertaken (5.5.);
- limitations revealed throughout the study (5.6.);
- issues to be dealt with in further research endeavours (5.7.); and
- a short conclusion (5.8.).

#### 5.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In **Chapter 1** an overview was given of the research that was to be undertaken. A background to the study was given and the research problem was demarcated. With the adoption of the CRSA Bill of Rights (1996) and, more specifically, the Policy on Religion and Education (2003), the importance of exploring how teachers understand the human right to 'religious freedom' was established. It was posited that the way in which teachers voice this understanding could well be influenced by their biography and school context. The empirical, qualitative research design, and the methods and processes to be used were discussed.

**Chapter 2** offered an exploration of the theoretical framework for the study, drawing on Social Identity Theorists, in order to facilitate a dialogue between the theory and the emerging data. Key concepts such as 'religious freedom' and voice were clarified. The literature which was reviewed provided the theoretical background for the interpretive approach employed in this study.

In **chapter 3** the theoretical underpinning for the empirical research was presented and the processes and methods that were employed by the researcher to address the research question, and the overall design of the research project, were explained. Discussion included the elucidation of the empirical, qualitative study which incorporated elements of small scale ethnography, using case study investigation. The qualitative methods and processes included the selection of a target group, the piloting of the study, the administration of self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, as well as the triangulation of the data collected. In this chapter ethical concerns that might have arisen in social research of this nature were also attended to.

**Chapter 4** provided the presentation of data, the analysis, critical interpretations and discussions of the data. Key empirical findings taken from this chapter are identified below (5.3.). Findings are based on a summary and analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured individual interviews conducted with each of the three school principals, the self-administered questionnaires completed by a total of thirty-two grades 4 - 6 teachers; and semi-structured focus group interviews in which a total of eight grade 6 LO teachers took part.

### 5.3. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section, both the theoretical (chapter 2) and empirical (chapter 4) findings are presented, focusing on the following:

- the human right to 'religious freedom';
- the influence of the teacher's biographical context on their understanding of 'religious freedom';
- the influence of the school context on their understanding of 'religious freedom'; and
- the voice of the teacher in a context of religious diversity.

### 5.3.1. The human right to 'religious freedom'

In chapter 2 (2.3.1.1.) 'religious freedom' was identified as a human right in terms of the CRSA Bill of Rights (1996). It was discussed in the context of the transition from mono-religious education to multireligion education, with the introduction of the Religion and Education Policy (2003). It became apparent that for teachers to make the change from a mono-religious discourse to a multireligion approach, they would need to have a clear understanding of 'religious freedom' as a human right.

The majority of teachers in the study defined human rights in terms of the need for people to be treated equally and with respect and dignity (4.4.1.1.b.i.; 4.4.1.2.b.i.; 4.4.1.3.b.i.). The human right to 'religious freedom' was defined as the right to practice the religion of one's choice, without discrimination or intimidation, and to afford others the opportunity to do the same (4.4.1.1.b.ii.; 4.4.1.2.b.ii.; 4.4.1.3.b.ii.; 4.5.1.1.(ATQ1); 4.5.1.2. (ATQ1); 4.5.1.3. (ATQ1)).

It was apparent that the teachers had a superficial, cognitive understanding of what human rights, and more specifically, the human right to 'religious freedom' entailed. The literature reviewed (chapter 2), and the researcher's personal experience during professional practice sessions (5.4.), demonstrated, however, that this understanding was not always translated into practice. The empirical findings in this study show that the way in which teachers voiced (5.3.4.) their understanding was dependent on certain other influences which will be discussed next.

Some teachers interpreted 'religious freedom' as the freedom to practice their own religion in response to a policy which they considered to be infringing on their constitutional rights. (4.4.1.1.b.ii. & 4.4.1.2.b.ii.). Ironically minority religious groups in those schools were subjected to continuous constitutional rights infringement as their religions were excluded from the school ethos and they were daily subjected to Christian assemblies.

### **5.3.2. The influence of the teachers' biographical context on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'**

'Identity theory', and more specifically, Social Identity Theory (2.2.2.), informed what emerged from the empirical research, providing a framework for making sense of the data. This theoretical framework was suited to this study which investigated how a teacher's biography, which according to Giddens (2000), forms the core of his/her personal identity, influenced his/her understanding of 'religious freedom'. The individual's religious identity was shaped initially by his/her parents and later the individual embraced this religious identity (or another) for him/herself (2.2.2.1.). The empirical findings in this study (4.4. & 4.5.) showed that the teachers, without exception<sup>102</sup>, were influenced by their biographical context in terms of religion. The teacher's biographical context thus informs the voice (5.3.4.) with which they express the human right to 'religious freedom' (2.3.1.1.). The empirical findings showed that those who were brought up in a home where religious diversity in society was accepted, experienced no discomfort in a multireligion school environment, unlike several of the teachers who had grown up in an environment where religion was exclusive in nature (4.4.2. & 4.5.2.).

Erikson (1968) posited that any 'identity crisis' that an individual experienced would be resolved before adulthood (2.2.1.1.). However, some of the teachers were undergoing an 'identity crisis' as adults as they tried to reconcile their own religious identity with the diverse religious context in which they were teaching (2.2.3.1.; 4.4.1.1.c.i.; 4.5.1.1.a.). Some teachers, despite being able to give a cognitive definition of 'religious freedom' (5.3.1.), in practice, understood 'religious freedom' to mean the right to engage with their religion only (4.3.2.). There were some teachers who were not totally comfortable with this in a school context with obvious religious diversity (4.4.1.1.c.i.; 4.5.1.1.a.). Christian teachers in formerly Christian schools, especially, experienced an 'identity crisis' (2.2.1.1.), as they struggled in a context where Christianity was no longer the institutionalized religion (4.3.1.1.; 4.4.1.1.e.). They continued to support the hegemonic status quo (with Christianity the dominant religion) and sought to maintain it (4.3.1.; 4.3.2.).

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<sup>102</sup> It was interesting to note that none of the respondents claimed to be atheist or agnostic.

This study was more substantially informed by Social Identity Theory (2.2.2.) which, according to Francis (2005), is determined by the relationship between the individual and society (2.2.2.). In section 2.2.2., religious identity was defined as the membership of a particular religious group (cf. Newman, 1997). In this case, the teachers' 'religious identity' affected their whole outlook on their teaching context, influencing everything they thought, said or felt. Teachers tended to identify themselves in terms of religious categories (cf. Jenkins, 1996; Hogg & Abrams, 1988) and much emotional significance was attached to those memberships (4.4.1.1.a.; 4.4.1.2.a.; 4.4.1.3.a.; 4.5.1.1. (ATQ2); 4.5.1.2. (ATQ2); 4.5.1.3. (ATQ2)). Their self categorization as members of a particular group led to inter-group discrimination (2.2.2.1.). Members of other religions were seen to be having, or lacking, certain virtues and this *extrinsic discrimination* (Helms, 1990) was considered to be morally sufficient for justifying differential treatment (4.3.1.& 4.3.4.). This was particularly evident in schools A and B where teachers who categorized themselves as members of the Christian religion were largely intolerant of other religions (4.4.1.1.; 4.4.1.2.; 4.5.1.1.; 4.5.1.2.). The findings endorsed the inherent danger that Tajfel (1978) alluded to, when he argued that 'in' groups can become exclusive and hegemonic (2.2.2.1.). In the context of this study religions other than those supported by the SMT are considered to be 'out' groups (2.2.2.1.). In school B the hegemonic religion is Catholicism and 'out' groups comprised any other 'religion'/'denomination'<sup>103</sup> (4.3.2.).

Some teachers in school A experienced a definite tension between the private domain of their own religious identity (biography) and the institutional or public domain which, in terms of DoE policy images, required a 'situational self' (cf. Nias, 1985, 1989) that complied with a multireligion approach within a context of religious diversity. These teachers faced *multiple identities* (Bendle, 2002) or the *pluralisation of life worlds* (Giddens, 2002) (2.2.2.2.). Managing 'multiple identities' in terms of religious and other contexts and roles, placed teachers in various discourses in which power was exercised. Individual agency was made difficult, especially, in a context of structural determinism (5.3.3.).

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<sup>103</sup> School B confused the terms 'religion' and 'denomination' and used them synonymously and interchangeably.

Teaching in a school with a confessional ethos meant that Christian teachers did not have to compromise their own religious identity (4.3.1.; 4.3.2.). However, certain teachers were still aware of the expectation, by the DoE, of a professional identity which adopted a multireligion approach to education (4.4.1.1.c.i.; 4.4.1.1.d.i.; 4.5.1.1. (ATQ2) & (ATQ3)). Those Christian teachers who saw the need to facilitate the religious diversity in the school from a multireligion perspective, struggled not only with the possibility of a possible compromise of their personal religious identity, but also with adopting a multireligion approach which would run counter to that adopted by the SMT (4.3.1.). With the exception of one teacher who was a member of school A's SMT, the teachers who expressed their concerns were not senior teachers and they felt that their voice (5.3.4.) in this regard would not be heard (4.4.1.1.c.ii.).

In summary, teachers' understanding of the right to 'religious freedom', as influenced by their biographical contexts, can be classified into four groups (4.6. & 4.7.):

- those who were quite accepting of a multireligion environment and approach;
- those who could not accept that any religion other than their own should be considered and who therefore teach from a confessional or mono-religious position;
- those who were supportive of the hegemonic status quo and sought to maintain it; and
- those who experienced discomfort at the fact that religions other than their own were being marginalized.

### **5.3.3. Influence of the school context on teachers' understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'**

The structure (school context) versus agency (individuals) debate (2.2.3.1.) shed light on the possible actions of individual teachers (agency) and the limitations to those actions imposed by certain structures, in this case, the school context. However, structures are temporal, and, although schools could portray a particular understanding of 'religious freedom', this needed to be reinforced by individual teachers in order for power and efficacy to be reconsolidated (cf. Baez, 2000) (2.2.3.1.). Power can be repressive because it determines what is acceptable and what is not. However, teachers can exercise power in the way in which they approach the everyday practices of their lives (cf. Foucault, 1980) (2.2.2.3.). Individuals can become 'agents of change' as they choose to regulate behaviour by exerting conscious choices,

thereby increasing autonomy and control (cf. Ransom, 2006). The power that individuals have, can either maintain the status quo, or cause change. This was evident in school A where, despite a management decision to remove RE from the LO curriculum, certain teachers did in fact include it and they taught it with a multireligion approach (4.5.1.1. ATQ3,).

Although their biographical context influenced and shaped their understanding of 'religious freedom' (5.3.2.), as did the school context, teachers did have the opportunity to negotiate different identities. Identity negotiation (2.2.2.2.) employs an element of individual agency. It would therefore be possible for Christian teachers to maintain their personal identity as Christians, for example, while in a professional context, putting that identity into parenthesis (Berger in Jackson, 1997:13 - 14) (2.3.1.2.), so as to promote 'religious freedom'. In studies in Britain a number of Christian teachers who had taught multireligion education admitted that in their teaching of other religions they still remained committed Christians in terms of their person identity (cf. Cole, 1988). It must be acknowledged, however, that individual agency is not always easy, especially in a school context such as that found in schools A and B where there is an *institutionalized identity* (Jenkins, 1996) and the SMT is perceived to be unbending and unaccommodating (4.5.1.1.& 4.5.1.2.) The effect of the collective over the individual in these cases was profound (cf. Hoyle, undated). Whole school policy change would be required in the case of schools A and B to allow for transformation in the approach to religious diversity to take place.

Symbolic interactionists stress the impact that 'significant others' (in this context, the SMT and SGB) could have on 'self identity' (cf. Harter, 1977; Adams, 2003) (2.2.2.). It was evident that the SMT in all three schools played a significant role in the way in which teachers were able to (or not able to) exercise individual choice in terms of their approach to religion (4.3.1.; 4.3.2.; 4.3.3.). School A provided an example of *institutional identity* (Jenkins, 1996) (2.2.2.1.) where a Christian ethos was embedded in the school mission statement and prospectus/code of conduct (4.3.1.). Although school B did not have a mission statement, the hegemonic religion, Catholicism, was clearly favoured (4.3.2.1.). Institutional identity appeared to be more prominent than personal identity, as evidenced by teachers who had chosen to maintain the status quo (4.4.1.1.c.ii. respondents A5, A7, A9; & 4.4.1.2.c.ii., respondent B6). In school C the SMT promoted 'religious freedom' (4.3.3.) and inclusivity. Teachers in this school came from a biographical context in which all religions were respected and embraced and they were

quite accepting and endorsing of a multireligion approach in the school context in which they were teaching (4.4.1.3. & 4.5.1.3.).

What became apparent is that KZNDEC intervention was non-existent. The principal in school B had not received any Religion and Education Policy (2003) documents and strongly suggested that the physical needs of the school were his priority (4.3.2.). The principal in school A told the researcher informally that the KZNDEC official agreed to overlook the blatantly Christian ethos which the school adopted (4.3.1.). The findings showed that the understanding of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) and its implementation varied from school to school. Teachers also indicated that no KZNDEC support had been received with regard to facilitating RE as part of LO (4.4.1.1.d.ii.; 4.4.1.2.d.ii.; 4.4.1.3.d.ii.; 4.5.).

#### **5.3.4. The voice of the teacher in a context of religious diversity**

Voice in this study, described the way in which teachers articulated their understanding of 'religious freedom'. Voice can be empowering and can have a very practical dimension. It can either express individual agency or can be constrained by structure (the school and/or DoE policy) (2.3.2.). Allen (2004:320) referred to *dialogical* voice which takes place when teachers are able to publicly express their opinions and consider the ideas of others (2.3.2.1.). These teachers voices could then play either an emancipatory or constraining role as teachers exercised the choice to either entrench or transform the approach to religious diversity in their school contexts (cf. Ling, 2003). What became apparent was that the teachers' understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' (5.3.1.) was crucial because their voice in a context of religious diversity would either promote or discourage an inclusive approach to education.

Principals and teachers, while paying lip-service to the importance of 'religious freedom' in school, were in fact unable, in praxis, to articulate a substantial understanding of 'religious freedom', as expected by the constitution, and more specifically, as embedded in, the Policy on Religion and Education (2003). In none of the selected schools did it seem that any individual was religiously literate (2.3.2.3.) and sufficiently motivated and enthusiastic about the Policy (2003) to engage with his or her colleagues in such a way as to cause teachers' attitudes, and lack of understanding, to change (4.3.4.; 4.4.2.; 4.5.2.).

Apart from the transformational powers that teachers' voice could exercise, teachers needed their voice to be heard by an audience that would listen respectfully and empathetically (cf. Allen, 2004) (2.3.2.1.). This study provided this opportunity for teachers to speak about their biographical and school contextual discourses (4.5.1.1.; 4.5.1.2.; 4.5.1.3.). This discourse approach provided the interpretive framework (cf. Nothling, 2001) for the teachers to interrogate the issues related to teaching in a context of religious diversity. By listening to (4.5.) and reading selected teachers' *narratives* (2.3.2.1.; 4.4.) the researcher was able to investigate how teachers' constructed and gave voice to their understanding of 'religious freedom' (4.4.1.1.c.ii.; 4.4.1.2.c.ii.; 4.4.1.3.c.ii.). From their responses it became apparent that their biographical context and school context influenced this understanding. In some cases they had difficulty reconciling their personal religious identities with institutional religious identities (4.4.1.1.e.; 4.5.1.1.a.).

It became apparent that many teachers would need to engage in a paradigm shift (Roux, 1998) (2.3.2.2.). For some teachers this would be very difficult while others might be able to adopt a more flexible approach (4.6.). It is significant to note that the Norms and Standards Policy (1998), as well as the Revised School Curriculum Statement (2002), assume that teachers are able to make, and indeed have made, the necessary paradigm shift. In the case of the teachers involved in this study, as evidenced by their voice in a context of religious diversity, this had, to a large extent, not occurred (4.6.).

### **5.3.5. Concluding findings**

The aims of this study (1.4.) were identified as a means to deal with the initial research question. It has been explained that teachers' biographies form the core of their social (and religious) identity and that this identity, together with the school context in which they taught, influenced the way in which they constructed their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom. They voiced this understanding in their respective contexts of religious diversity. Recommendations on how teachers might engage in a discourse to clarify and develop this voice will be provided in Section 5.5.3.

This research project was significant because it added to existing knowledge (in the research domain of religion education) by showing how teachers constructed their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'. This understanding would inform their voice which, it is reasonable to presume, would in turn, inform their classroom praxis. In terms of Foucault's (1980, 1990) notion of power relations, voice could be considered as an expression of agency (Deetz, 1998), meaning that individual teachers could either entrench or change the approach employed by teachers in a context of religious diversity. Learning and teaching about religion in RE should respond to the multiplicity of personal and collective religious identities. Without denying the traditions of others, teachers would have to put their own beliefs in 'parenthesis' so as to adopt an impartial, yet empathetic approach to the beliefs of others (cf. Berger in Jackson, 1997).

The transformation in South African society, and specifically in education, has challenged the core of teachers' self identity, but it has also ushered in the opportunity for teachers to reshape their identity and to fashion a new set of understandings about who they are and what they consider to be fundamental values to themselves (Francis, 2005:12). Understanding the human right to 'religious freedom' would contribute to the reshaping process.

What was particularly evident was that meaningful intervention, in respect of monitoring the implementation of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) on the part of the KZNDEC was lacking. One school did not receive the Policy document (2003) (4.3.2.), while another did, but only the principal read it and her interpretation thereof was disseminated to the staff (4.3.1.). Principals and teachers were not well informed and would have benefited from KZNDEC intervention such as in-service workshops, seminars and visits from departmental officials. Whole school development was required since it was apparent that individual teachers readily conformed to school practice (5.3.3.). KZNDEC intervention needs to be mindful of this.

Teachers seemed to be unable to reflect and act reflexively on their understanding of 'religious freedom', and 'religious literacy' (2.3.2.3.) levels were often low. This suggests that aspects of teacher education programmes, especially in respect of inclusiveness and more specifically religious diversity, need to be interrogated afresh.

The researcher's self-reflection, and reflexivity, regarding the research process will be discussed next. This will be undertaken to indicate how the researcher might have influenced the recommendations made, but also to provide a retrospective view of the researcher's experiences and assumed positions regarding this particular study

#### 5.4. SELF-REFLECTION AND REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity entails reflecting on oneself and is a process of introspection and self-examination (cf. Wellington, 2000:200). It is also part of the process of reflectivity which means thinking critically about the research process in order to reveal and assess any influence the researcher might have had on the situation studied (ibid.). It includes examining assumptions, prior experience and possible bias in conducting the research and analysing findings. This should lead to the outputs being more reliable. Research in the domain of religion requires the researcher to be well-informed and to have prior understanding which includes background information and knowledge about matters such as the respondents' religion, as well as intrinsic<sup>104</sup> knowledge (Roux & Du Preez, 2005). This is important because the researcher's prior understandings shape what she observes, writes about and interprets. The exclusion of prior understandings is to risk biasing the interpretation in the direction of false objectivity (Denzin, 2002:364). According to Wellington (2000:420), the researcher needs to be candid about the interpretive nature of the approach: *...what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions. An emic perspective is the outsiders attempt to produce, as faithfully as possible, the respondent's own responses, whereas the etic perspective is the outsider's subsequent attempt to take the descriptive information they have already gathered and to organize, systematize, compare and redescribe it in terms of a system of their own making* (cf. McCutheon, 1999:17).

Nesbitt (in Roux & Du Preez, 2005:279) suggests that the research process in the domain of religion may contribute to the researcher's spiritual journey and thus possibly influence

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<sup>104</sup> This refers to any kind of knowledge owned by an individual before embarking on a study. This knowledge can consist of that which is taken uncritically from people with influence during the formative years or that which is considered to be common knowledge.

researcher's and respondents' own religiousness<sup>105</sup> and voice. It is also anticipated by the researcher that self-reflection and reflexivity could assist her with future research ventures. This research is, to a great extent, a response to a SANPAD (2005 - 2007) project led by the researcher's supervisor. Part of the first phase of the project explored how HRV (Du Preez, 2005) are facilitated by means of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The researcher was interested in how interreligious dialogue could facilitate the human right to 'religious freedom'. She was particularly interested to explore how in-service teachers voice their understanding of 'religious freedom', and how this understanding is constructed. To her knowledge this was an unexplored area of study. The research idea became a formal research question with an appropriate research design. Whilst constantly engaging with the literature, the research proposal was written, submitted and accepted. Three schools were selected in which research was to take place and the necessary permission was requested and granted by the KZNDEC and the school principals. Research in the schools officially began in June 2007.

For the sake of clarity the researcher's position at the outset was that it would not be ethically justifiable for learners who were obliged to attend neighbourhood government schools to possibly be subjected to a religious ethos which was exclusive in nature. The researcher's experience during UKZN BEd professional practice periods, along with feedback from students, indicated that many government schools were in fact not inclusive. This was particularly the case in schools which followed a previously institutionalized Christian ethos. When reflecting upon this position the researcher became convinced that if teachers were better informed, and were given the opportunity to voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom', schools might offer and become more flexible and inclusive environments. To interrogate this assumption it would be necessary to research how teachers construct their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'.

Further reflection on the research process convinced the researcher that while she perceived her own position to be unbiased, she was nevertheless prepared, as she entered the research process, to allow the findings of the research to convince her of the validity or

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<sup>105</sup> This can be defined as a conscience dependency on a deity/God. Religiousness is evident in an individual's commitment, personality, experiences, beliefs and thinking in devotional practice, morality and other social activities (cf. Roux & Du Preez, 2005).

otherwise of the assumptions she had made. The researcher brought experiential knowledge to this research and this gave her certain perspectives and insights. This critical subjectivity became part of the process of inquiry and analysis (Reason, 1988) lending an element of autoethnography to this research. This was valid because it was primarily the researcher's own experience and interest that led to this particular research design and topic.

Three notions which became evident during the self-reflection and reflexivity on the research process include: the researcher's stance as being an insider and/or outsider; the literature review and its influence on what the researcher perceived; and a short indication of reflection regarding some methods used. Self-reflection and reflexivity have been included at this juncture so as to promote accountability and responsibility regarding the entire research endeavour (cf. Skeggs, 2002:369).

#### **5.4.1. The researcher's stance as being an insider and/or outsider**

The researcher adopted the positions of both outsider and insider. As an *outsider* she facilitated the distribution and collection of the self-administered questionnaires, met with the respondents and explained the purpose of the research, thanked them for their willingness to participate and ensured them of confidentiality in the process. She also clarified respondents' queries. As the interviewer, in the semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, the researcher adopted the stance of an *outsider* as she observed the respondents, whilst also recording unbiased observations and interpretations of the responses. She adopted more of an *insider* approach as she sought to establish a rapport with the respondents and attempted to view the world from their perspective. The emotive responses, during the interviews, intertwined with personal belief and religious convictions, encouraged the researcher to *walk the path* with the respondents during the collection of data (Roux & Du Preez, 2005:279).

In schools A and B she was more of an *insider* in the sense that she was also a Christian but not part of the same denominations. As a Christian she could empathise to some extent with their discomfort and fear of change. As an *outsider* to that particular context, however, she was able to stand back and observe the lack of religious literacy and reflexivity on the part of many of the teachers. The need for an understanding of HRV was evident. The researcher

was more of an outsider in the context of School C. She observed the lack of religious literacy but found the willingness to promote 'religious freedom' to be in keeping with HRV.

The researcher was an outsider in that she was undertaking research in three school environments to which she did not belong. This was useful in that it helped her to remain impartial and to objectively record observations.

#### **5.4.2. The literature review and its influence on what the researcher perceived**

The literature surveyed in chapter 2 highlighted the difficulties experienced by teachers in making the transition from a mono-religious to a multireligion approach to education. It also suggested strategies for the implementation of RE (2.3.1.2.). Nowhere in the literature did the researcher come across empirical research that had been conducted amongst in-service teachers trying to gauge their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' and how this understanding might be constructed and voiced. The literature pointed to the need for research in this area. The researcher concluded that for successful implementation of the Religion and Education Policy (2003), and for the facilitation of education in a context of religious diversity, and the well being of the teachers in this context, she should embark on this research project. Because much of the literature focused on the reluctance of teachers to move away from a mono-religious approach, the researcher anticipated this response and was not surprised to find this to be the case in especially two of the schools in which research took place.

#### **5.4.3. Some notes on the research methodology and methods**

Limitations of the methods used to conduct this research, namely survey research, using self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, are discussed in section 5.4.

Subjectivity regarding the researcher's interpretations of data and overall experiences comes into question when qualitative research is conducted. It must be noted that by means of triangulation (4.6.) the researcher attempted to eliminate subjectivity from both the researcher and the respondents. It should also be noted that self-reflection and reflexivity provided the researcher with the opportunity to reflect and to become aware of the possible biases she

might have encountered. This awareness became a conscious notion that was always considered during the research in an attempt to become more objective, noting, nevertheless, that one can never be entirely objective.

The literature review provided the theoretical background for the interpretive approach that was employed. According to Denzin (2000:365), *with interpretation conclusions are always drawn but interpretation is never finished*. There was always the possibility that the researcher could abuse her authority through the way in which she gave an account of the findings (cf. Jackson, 2004). There was also the danger of the researcher projecting her subjective experience on to this study. The possibility was also there of the researcher suppressing individual voices of insiders and of constructing artificial 'wholes' from the experience of individuals. Aware of these dangers and possibilities, the researcher was as careful as possible to present a true representation of the research findings.

The researcher was careful not to become bound up with her own 'self', thereby ensuring that the study was not made to be less representative, oversimplified and decontextualised. As far as possible, she tried to stand at a distance from the data.

## 5.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestions to enhance the process of implementation of the human right to 'religious freedom' will be explained in this section. A number of recommendations will be described and suggestions made as to how they could begin to be implemented. The recommendations are not context specific. They are suggestions to improve practices in general.

### 5.5.1. KZNDEC intervention

The KZNDEC needs to establish which of its schools have not received the Religion and Education Policy (2003). It became apparent that the KZNDEC needs to monitor the implementation of the Policy (2003) more carefully for, at present there is considerable inconsistency in terms of what is tolerated and of what schools are doing in the name of implementation (5.3.3.). This situation needs to be addressed in the interests of standardization, transparency and accountability. From the point of view of the schools themselves, principals and teachers need to be encouraged to take a stronger initiative in

informing themselves of government policy and its implementation imperatives. Improved communication channels between the KZNDEC and its principals/teachers is an essential first step in this process. Perhaps certain officials need to be specifically tasked with the necessary responsibilities in this regard. The KZNDEC needs to think of concrete ways of offering meaningful support and training to SGBs and SMTs, specifically in the area of addressing religious diversity in respect of both policy and implementation. Since individual teachers conform so readily to school practice (5.3.3.), whole school development is recommended. Addressing this will be a major challenge for the KZNDEC which has close to 6000 schools, many of which are situated in very remote rural areas, to deal with. SGBs in turn, need to think of ways of better informing/educating the parent communities from which they are drawn.

### **5.5.2. Teacher education**

The implementation strategy of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) in schools (5.5.1.) will not necessarily change the attitudes and methodologies of any teacher when dealing with different religions (cf. Roux, 2005). Practicing teachers (and pre-service teachers) need to be able to reflect critically and act reflexively on their understanding of 'religious freedom' and how this informs their classroom praxis. According to Francis (2005), *reflexivity reinforces the notion that reflection could create theory capable of leading to action*. Reflexivity is essential for understanding the complex nature of multireligion classroom praxis. Reflection can also lead to personal growth and development, and thus has the potential to significantly improve the 'knowledge base' from which teachers seem to be operating at present. Where this is not already the case, teacher education programmes, and in-service courses and workshops, need to be in place in order to facilitate this. With particular regard to in-service LO teachers, workshops and short in-service courses might be useful in helping to address the place of RE in LO (5.3.3.). It is particularly important that teachers should be able to be impartial in their diverse religious teaching contexts.

According to Roux (2006), acquired knowledge alone about different religions does not influence teaching skills and attitudes towards learners from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Teachers need to be equipped to facilitate a reflective-dialogical approach with phenomenological notions in their classroom praxis (2.3.1.2.) This method will also help

teachers to understand their own religion better and to reflect on issues in other religions (Roux, 1996). The same approach also needs to be promoted with pre-service teachers in order to equip them to engage with a context of religious diversity. The researcher recommends that the KZNDEC and UKZN Faculty of Education enter into a partnership whereby short courses or workshops are offered to equip LO teachers to facilitate a multireligion approach to education. Courses should also be extended to the SMT so as to promote whole school development in the approach to religious diversity.

### **5.5.3. HRV Education and a discourse approach**

Given the importance of human rights in the CRSA (1996), it is important that all citizens should acquire a level of religious literacy (2.3.2.3.). In schools, an inclusive approach in all learning areas across the curriculum needs to be encouraged. However, it is apparent that many teachers lack religious literacy and so a HRV approach focusing on universal values could serve as the point of departure (cf. Roux, Du Preez & Ferguson, 2007). A moral understanding of HRV could be empowering in that it could possibly enable teachers to make the move from a mono-religious mindset to a multireligion, inclusive attitude.

It is essential that the school context needs to be supportive of teachers being able to articulate their voices. What is needed is a reflective-dialogical voice that provides for the expression of own opinions and consideration of the ideas of others (cf. 2.3.1.2.). This begins when teachers meet each other simply as people and not as representatives of one religion or another, while the 'conversation' involved needs to enable participants to engage substantially with each other, sharing their narrative (which includes tradition and practice) (2.3.2.1.). This dialogue can have powerful emancipatory potential for those involved. Teachers emerging from it are likely to be less fearful of compromising their own religious positions and more able to engage with confidence in situations of religious diversity. They may, furthermore, be likely to want to participate in conversations about the Religion and Education Policy (2003) and its implementation. The emancipatory potential of discourse analysis, in this regard, should not be underestimated for it has the ability to highlight the need for a new 'language' in a context of religious diversity.

## 5.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Jackson (2004:154) *researchers need to be frank about any deficiencies in their data or weaknesses in their methodology, as well as being judicious in interpreting results.*

The following limiting factors emerged as study unfolded. These will be discussed under the following headings:

### 5.6.1. Research scope and time available

The scope of the research study conducted for this thesis, and the time available, might be considered a limiting factor. A longer period of time might have provided the opportunity to have increased the number of schools included in the sample. It must be kept in mind, however, that the schools that were used in this research can be regarded as being fairly representative of government schools, in that school A was a Former Model C-school, school B a peri-urban black school and school C a Former HoD-school. Missing from the sample, it must be acknowledged, were black rural schools. Independent schools were also excluded, this being as a consequence of a decision taken at the outset of the study.

Gerson and Horowitz (2002:219) suggest that in order to determine if survey research patterns were organized and recurring or merely a reflection of a particular situation, there should be an engagement in a second round of the same study. However, it was not possible to repeat this research due to time limitations.

### 5.6.2. National strikes

The researcher made appointments to conduct research in the schools in June 2007. One week before the first appointment an unforeseen, disruptive and protracted national strike of civil servants, focusing on salary and conditions of service issues, occurred. The strike was supported by all the teacher unions in the country.

At school A, although the school was closed to learners, the teachers 'signed in' on a daily basis and the principal agreed that the researcher could conduct the research as arranged. The appointments made with schools B and C, however, could not be kept as scheduled. As time progressed some strikers resorted to intimidatory behaviour and many schools were

forced to close in the interest of apparent solidarity. Most schools in the country closed and only reopened after the July holiday period. Various recovery plans were set in motion at the commencement of the third school term. The researcher was only able to carry out research in schools B and C at the end of July and beginning of August 2007. This caused a major time delay and impacted on the researcher's time frames and deadlines for completing the study.

The teachers in schools B and C were pressured by the requirements of the 'recovery plan' and were not as generous with the time made available to the researcher as was the case in school A where teachers were not pressurised in the same way. This is why, in the case of school C, when the semi-structured focus group interview with the Grade 6 LO teachers was cut short because of a misunderstanding with regard to the allocated time, there was not an opportunity to return to the school to complete the process.

### **5.6.3. The truth factor**

It needs to be acknowledged that there is the possibility that respondents might not always have been entirely honest in their responses for various reasons. These reasons include the possibility that answers were given according to what respondents thought the researcher might be looking for; the possibility that respondents were not remembering well when thinking back to their formative years; the possibility that respondents did not understand what was required of them by the question (in spite of clarification given by the researcher); the chance that respondents might have felt offended or affronted by the intrusion of the researcher; and, finally, the possibility that answers perceived to be pleasing to the principal might have been given (in spite of the researcher having guaranteed confidentiality). Possible consultation between respondents, when completing the self-administered questionnaire, can also not be ruled out (4.4.1.2., respondents B9 & B10). A further limitation could also have been the degree to which the teachers' own religion and belief system restricted them from thinking beyond their own religious position. Also to be taken into account is the fact that respondents might have been responding according to what they perceived the expected answers to be, either in terms of the Policy (2003) expectations, or the rationale of the school.

#### **5.6.4. The language factor**

It is possible that the researcher did not always understand the respondents correctly and that some meaning might have been lost in the transcription (cf. Wengraf, 2001) and/or interpretation of responses. This was not necessarily due to the use of English as a medium of communication. English was the first language of the majority of respondents and for those for whom this was not the case the researcher was confident, on the basis of responses in formal and informal exchanges, that their proficiency in English was sound. Furthermore, all the teachers were teaching through the medium of English. They had also completed their tertiary education through this language medium.

#### **5.6.5. Policy**

The question has to be asked whether the Religion and Education Policy (2003) itself might not pose a limitation in this study. In the case of school B, according to the principal, the Policy (2003) had not been received by the school. Where the Policy (2003) had been received by schools it would be reasonable to assume that the principals and teachers who read it understood it correctly and would implement it faithfully, and yet it seemed that this was far from the case.

#### **5.6.6. Case Study research**

According to Andersson (1999:159) a *lesson is something derived from a given case but which has potential generalizability to other situations and settings*. In this study three schools were studied. By looking at more than one school a number of similarities and common occurrences were observable. Andersson (1999:159) acknowledges, however, that many critics of the case study method argue that it lacks reliability in that it is possible for different researchers, using the same method, to come to different conclusions about what is being studied. In defense of the method, good case studies incorporate multiple data sources and can go beyond the use of single questionnaires or sets of interviews. Findings based on conclusions suggested by different data sources are far stronger than those suggested by

one alone. In this study the data collected from a thick description of the schools, self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were triangulated.

According to Samuel and Stephens (2000:490-491) a criticism of the case study approach could be that it is *very difficult to draw generalisations and broader lessons ... from individual life experiences*. A possible retort might be that to lend authenticity to the life experiences of teachers, individual case studies need to be used. Inductive generalization involves applying inferences from specific observations (as in the case study approach) to a wider population.

## 5.7. ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

From the research undertaken in this thesis the following suggestions for further research activities emerge.

### 5.7.1. The impact of the teacher's voice

It is reasonable to presume that as teachers give voice (5.3.4.) to their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom' they are likely:

- themselves to become empowered;
- to view the content of what they teach more insightfully;
- to select and employ their teaching methods more creatively; and
- to become agents of curriculum development and design in their own right.

In addition to this it should be noted that the teacher's voice can either entrench discrimination on the basis of religion or foster inclusiveness in the classroom. Several possibilities for further research are contained in the above.

### 5.7.2. Policy and its implementation.

It is apparent from this study that the implementation of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) leaves much to be desired (5.3.3.). Particular problem areas which open doors for further research include the following:

- how does policy, once formulated, reach departmental officials and how is it understood by them?

- how do the said officials ensure that the policy reaches the schools and is understood by them?
- how do the principals and teachers in the schools, receive, interpret and implement the policy?
- how is the implementation of policy in the schools monitored by the schools themselves and by the departmental officials?

A further area for research might assume a national focus, comparing how the different provinces are proceeding with the implementation of the Religion and Education Policy (2003).

### **5.7.3. Parental involvement in policy formulation and implementation**

The degree to which parents become involved (5.3.3.) in policy formation and implementation, and how this unfolds is, bearing in mind what has been alluded to in respect of the Religion and Education Policy (2003), an area requiring further understanding and research.

### **5.7.4. Teacher identity formation**

The issue of the 'multiple identities' (Giddens, 2000) engaged by teachers as they move 'in to' and 'out of' various social contexts (bearing in mind that religious identity is only one of many other identities) provides scope for further investigation and clarification (5.3.2.).

## **5.8. CONCLUSION**

It is apparent from the research that has been conducted that the Policy on Religion and Education (2003) is not well understood by teachers, that it is being implemented in various ways and that it is informed by differing religious discourses. Teachers have, nevertheless, been obliged to construct their particular understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom', influenced as they are, by their biographical and school contexts, and to give voice to this, within a context of religious diversity.

In constructing this understanding teachers have not really had the opportunity to voice their fears, concerns and lack of knowledge in respect of religious inclusiveness and diversity. It seems, from this, that they have had little say in policy formulation and implementation in the

schools in which they work. While some teachers may not feel threatened by this, others may. Discourse provides teachers with an interpretive framework in which they can interrogate issues such as the possibility of feeling threatened in a school context of religious diversity, trying to maintain a mono-religious approach in a multireligion environment, and managing the complexity, and perhaps conflict, between a personal 'inner' religious identity and that of a professional identity. A discourse approach, in giving full respect and recognition to teachers' voices, has the potential to amend this situation, empowering individuals to exercise individual agency.

## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

## Letter to schools and the Department of Education

20 March 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to do research at School X

I hereby request permission for Mrs Janet Jarvis to do empirical research at School X.

Mrs Janet Jarvis (student number 15006379) is an enrolled MEd student (full thesis) in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of Stellenbosch. The title of the thesis is *The Voice of the Teacher in the Context of Religious Freedom: A KwaZulu-Natal case study*.

It is envisaged that Mrs Jarvis's empirical research will be conducted in three schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Her intention is to conduct an individual interview with the School Principal, a focus group interview with Grade 6 Life Orientation teachers and to ask all Grade 4 – 6 teachers to complete a questionnaire.

Mrs Jarvis would like to conduct her research in School X, as it fits the profile demanded by the research project. All interaction, findings and reports will be handled within the ethical rules of research set by the University of Stellenbosch, which stresses issues like respect for anonymity and the voluntary participation of the schools and teachers involved. There will be no interference with the school activities or the curriculum.

Mrs Jarvis's research is part of an international research programme (South Africa and the Netherlands), which involves a panel of post-graduate students. Her research and data analysis will help shape the curriculum of pre-service training programmes for teachers at tertiary institutions.

I hope that you will be able to accommodate Mrs Jarvis, and I thank you for your assistance in this regard.

Sincerely



Professor Cornelia Roux  
(Supervisor)

## **APPENDIX B**

### Letter received from the Department of Education

Thank you very much for your letter dated 2007 March 20 but was received on the 2007 July 02. I am very sorry that it has taken this long to respond to your request the situation was beyond ones control.

Permission is hereby granted to Janet Jarvis to conduct her research in all 3 schools that she is interested in. It would be very much appreciated if interviews could be held after contact time. The Department wishes Mrs Jarvis everything of the best in her academic endeavours.

Yours sincerely  
Dr. P.P. Nyembe Kganye

This letter was received by email from Phumzile Kganye  
[\[mailto:Phumzile.Kganye@kzndoe.gov.za\]](mailto:Phumzile.Kganye@kzndoe.gov.za)  
Sent: 03 July 2007 17:11

## APPENDIX C

Ethical Code signed by researcher and respondents

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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#### **The Voice of the Teacher in the Context of Religious Freedom: A KwaZulu-Natal case study.**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Janet Jarvis from the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research results of this study will be made public in the form of a Master's Degree dissertation supervised by the University of Stellenbosch. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because the profile of the school at which you teach meets the requirements of this study and because you are a teacher in the Intermediate Phase.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to answer the following research question:

*How do teachers in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools construct their understanding of the human right to religious freedom?*

The main objectives of the research to be undertaken are:

- to identify how a selected group of teachers voice the human right to religious freedom from the perspective of their own biographical context;
- to establish how the school context, in which the teachers operate, influences their approach to RE in the classroom.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

Participation in this study will entail the following:

- A semi structured individual interview with the school Principal;
- Grade 4 – 6 teachers completing a questionnaire;
- Grade 6 Life Orientation teachers participating in a semi-structured focus group interview.

#### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORT**

The study to be undertaken will not provide any potential risks or discomfort to the participant.

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

The participant will not necessarily directly benefit from the research. However, the research output may inform the implementation of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) in particular as well as possible in-service training of teachers.

#### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

No payment will be made to participants of this study.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Information will not be released to any other party for any reason.

The audio taped or transcribed data can be reviewed by the participant at any stage during the research process. Tapes will be destroyed as soon as they have been transcribed by the investigator.

*In the dissertation the schools and relevant participants will be referred to as: school A/B/C in context A/B/C with principal A/B/C and teachers 1,2,3, etc.*

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATOR**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Prof Cornelia Roux (supervisor of the study) at 021-808-2288.

#### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please feel free to ask the supervisor of this study, Prof Cornelia Roux.

**SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT**

The information above was described to me by Janet Jarvis in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to the abovementioned participant who was encouraged and given the opportunity to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.



\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Investigator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*



Professor Cornelia Roux  
(Supervisor)

## Appendix D

### Situation analysis- interview schedule with school principal

- 1 Name of school
- 2 Contact details:
  - Address
  - Contact number
  - Email address
- 3 Name of principal
- 4 Number of staff members
- 5 Male/female ratio
- 6 Racial breakdown
- 7 Geographical situation (rural/suburban etc.)
- 8 Independent/Government
- 9 Quintile or Decile Rating /School resources
- 10 Number of pupils
- 11 Co-ed/Single sex
- 12 GET/FET
- 13 What is the language of instruction in the classroom?
- 14 Is this the same as the first/home language?
- 15 Description of management structure in the school
- 16 Description of community in which school is situated.
- 17 Which religions are represented in the community?
- 18 Is there a dominant religion in the community? If so please identify.
- 19 What is the cultural and religious composition of pupils in your school?
- 20 Is there a more dominant religion (and if so what is it) amongst staff?
- 21 and learners?
- 22 To what degree is there parental involvement in determining the religious policy for the school?
- 23 What role, if any, do the teachers in the school play in determining the

religious policy of the school?

- 24 In the pursuing of various religious activities in the school what role is played by the respective 'religious practitioners' in the community?
- 25 Is 'religious freedom' promoted in the school ethos and if so, how?
- 26 Do religious groups e.g. Students' Christian Association or Hindu Students' Society operate in your school? If so which groups does this include?
- 27 Are outside religious agencies permitted to use your school facilities? If so on what basis is the decision made as to which religions will be accepted and which will not?
- 28 What measures are taken to ensure that exam schedules and test dates do not conflict with important religious festivals/holy days?
- 29 Do extra curricular activities take into account learner and staff attendance at supplementary religious schools and places of worship? If so, explain how.
- 30 With regard to bereavement procedures does school policy take account of the religious customs and requirements of individuals? If so what is the school policy in this regard?
- 31 When catering for school functions are dietary requirements as specified by specific religions catered for? How is this done?
- 32 With regard to resources purchased for the library is there a school policy indicating clearly what religious material will be accepted or not? If so, elaborate on the policy.
- 33 Are visiting religious speakers invited to address the pupils? If so based on what criteria?
- 34 If fundraising takes place there could be certain types of fund-raising that conflict with learner/parent beliefs and values. How could this issue be addressed?
- 35 Does the school uniform and dress code take account of the requirements of the religious traditions represented in the school? Elaborate.
- 36 Do end of year staff functions if any, represent only one set of values, beliefs or religious traditions to the exclusion of others? Elaborate.

- 37 Is harassment based on religious belief covered in a school bullying and harassment policy? Elaborate.
- 38 Do you have school assemblies? If so, are they a school activity or a religious activity? Elaborate.
- 39 Does the school have a specific school hymn and/or prayer?
- 40 What training or support, if any, do teachers receive to teach in a multi-religion environment?
- 41 Who teaches the Religion Education component of Life Orientation?
- 42 What training or support has this person/s received to facilitate multi-religion lessons?
- 43 Does the school have a mission statement and is respect for 'religious freedom' included therein?

## APPENDIX E

### Self-administered questionnaire

#### Questionnaire for all GET (intermediate) teachers (Grades 4 – 6)

Thank you for participating in this research project. Your anonymity is assured and you are asked to answer the questions set out below as honestly and as fully as possibly.

The aim of this research is to investigate how teachers construct their understanding of the human right 'religious freedom' and how this understanding is influenced by their own biographical context as well as the school context within which they are teaching.

Please tick in the relevant boxes where applicable and fill in your responses in the space provided in the right-hand column where applicable.

<b>Biographical Information</b>	
1	Please indicate whether you are  Male <input type="checkbox"/> or Female <input type="checkbox"/> <small>This gender sensitive question is optional.</small>
2	Please indicate your age:  20 - 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 - 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 - 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 - 60 <input type="checkbox"/>
3	How long have you been in the teaching profession?  0-5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 -20 years <input type="checkbox"/>  20-30 years <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 years <input type="checkbox"/>
4	How long have you been teaching at this school?  0-5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 -20 years <input type="checkbox"/>  20-30 years <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 years <input type="checkbox"/>

5	<p>Is the position you hold a:</p> <p>Government post? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>or</p> <p>Governing Body post? <input type="checkbox"/></p>
6	<p>Do you teach Life Orientation?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please indicate which grade/s:</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7	<p>Which school/s did you attend as a pupil?</p>
8	<p>What post school qualifications have you attained?</p>
9	<p>Which tertiary institution/s did you attend?</p>
10	<p>What is your religious affiliation?          If you are a Christian please state your denomination e.g. Catholic, Anglican, etc.          If you are a Muslim, please state Sunni or Shiite etc. or any other grouping religious or not, that you belong to.</p>
11	<p>Would you consider yourself to be a practising member of your religion or alternatively a member in name only (nominal)?</p> <p>Practising <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Nominal <input type="checkbox"/></p>

12	What, if any, was your parents' religion and did this have an influence on you in any way as you were growing up?	
13	What are your earliest recollections of any belief system or practice when you were growing up?	
14	Would you describe your experience of this belief system or practice during your formative years as positive or negative? Explain.	
15	At what stage did you decide to embrace the belief system/ value orientation/ worldview/religion you now hold? How did this happen?	
16	What do you understand by the term 'human rights'?	

17	What do you understand by the term 'religious freedom'?	
18	What do you understand by the term 'multi-religion'?	
19	What do you think is the difference between Religion Education and Religious Instruction?	
20	Do you think your religious affiliation affects the way in which you view human rights issues like 'religious freedom'? Please explain.	
21	Do you feel threatened in your own belief system and/or feel like you have to compromise your beliefs in order to accommodate 'religious freedom' in your school context? Please elaborate.	

22	Do you think it is possible for one to learn from the views and practices of other religions without compromising one's own religious beliefs? Explain.	
<b>School Context</b>		
23	What grade do you teach?	
24	How do you think one's understanding of 'religious freedom' could impact on a 'whole-school' ethos and one's teaching in the classroom?	
25	Do you think that the human right to 'religious freedom' is promoted in your school? If not why do you think this is the case and if it is promoted in what way is this done?	
26	Do you think religion is given any value or recognition in your school as a whole? Explain.	

27	In respect of religious matters do you feel like you have a voice in the school and that your voice is heard? Please elaborate.	
28	Would you say that there is a dominant religion in the school and if so, how do you know this and how do you feel about this?	
29	Do you think that the purpose and value of Religion Education as part of Life Orientation is recognized in and by the school? Explain.	
30	Is there a religious component to school assemblies and if so, how is this facilitated?	
31	Do you know what your school policy is with regard to 'religious freedom'? If so, do you think it is being implemented satisfactorily? Explain.	
32	In your school, has the approach to religion in general and in the classroom in particular, changed, since the introduction to the new Religion and Education Policy (2003)? If so how?	

## APPENDIX F

### Interview schedule for semi-structured focus group interviews

#### **Semi- structured focus group interview with Life Orientation teachers in Grade 6**

##### Interview schedule

- 1 What do you understand by the term 'religious freedom'?
- 2 What religions are you aware of that constitute the religious diversity in South African society?
- 3 Do you think it is important to promote freedom of religion in South African schools? If so, explain why.
- 4 How do you think having an understanding of 'religious freedom' should impact on how and what one teaches/learns in the classroom?
- 5 What do you think is the difference between Religion Education and Religious Instruction?
- 6 How is the religious education/teaching that children receive at this school facilitated?
- 7 What has been the reaction to multi-religion education from parents, pupils and members of the community (possibly from different faith groups/organizations)?
- 8 Do you think that parents and the community have an understanding of what Religion Education entails and how it is incorporated into the broader framework of Life Orientation? Explain.
- 9 Do you think your own religious affiliation in any way impacts on your facilitating Religion Education? Please explain.
- 10 Do you feel threatened in your own faith or feel like you have to compromise your own beliefs in order to promote religious freedom? Explain.

- 11 Do you think it is possible to learn from the views and practices of others without compromising your own beliefs? Explain.
- 12 How do you think your own biography influences your understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?
- 13 Do you think it is possible to teach human rights and, specifically the right to 'religious freedom', through Religion Education? Please explain.
- 14 What teaching strategies do you think would be particularly appropriate for teaching Religion Education?
- 15 Do you feel equipped to facilitate Religion Education in the classroom? Please explain.
- 16 Do you make use of any textbook material? If so please specify.
- 17 Have you had access to and read the Religion and Education Policy Document (2003)?
- 18 What if any, Department of Education input has been received in terms of training and support with regard to facilitating Religion Education as part of Life Orientation in your particular school?
- 19 What current support structures for facilitating Religion Education are in place, if any, within your school?
- 20 What possible collaboration is there with Life Orientation teachers from other schools?
- 21 How do you think the school context in which you are teaching influences your understanding of 'religious freedom'?
- 22 In your school has the approach to religion changed since the introduction to the new Religion and Education Policy (2003)? If so how?
- 23 Do any practices/attitudes towards religion prior to the introduction of the Religion and Education Policy (2003) linger? If yes, elaborate.

## APPENDIX G

Presentation of data gathered in interview in School A (everything printed in italics in this table was edited by the researcher to ensure confidentiality and to add information in the interests of clarity).

<b>Clustered IQs (1 - 5, 13 - 15)</b>	<b>IM → ATQ1:</b> How do the selected teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?
JJ: Can I start off by asking you what your understanding is of 'religious freedom'?	A1: It gives every person the right to believe what they want to believe and be comfortable to practise it. S: Um, I think it is if you know every other religion and you have all the information, you know everything, and you have the freedom to choose your religion that you like. That is all. L: I think it is more an opportunity that you are given ( <i>hesitation</i> ) freedom of choice. You have that choice to choose from.
When asked what religions are represented in South Africa that they are aware of, various contributions were forthcoming:	L: Christianity being one of the major ones, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, New Age. JJ: Any others? L: African Traditional, Shembe, Zionists. Very small community of scientologists. S: There are a lot of Eastern fractures that are starting up now in South Africa and I am unfortunately very ignorant of the Indian religions... L: ( <i>interjecting</i> ) No it is not just Indian-based, it is all nationalities. It is not specific to race.
JJ: So just from the comments you have made there is definitely more than one religion represented in this country. Do you think that it is important to promote freedom of religion in South African schools?	A1: ( <i>Enthusiastically</i> ) I think it is a good idea because <i>um</i> at our school we are now teaching various religions ( <i>learners from various religions</i> ). They can ask whatever questions they need to ask and if they happen to ask a Christian question you can answer it to the best of your ability and even if other religions are ( <i>taught</i> ) in other schools, like everyone is being taught all of them, at least the opportunity of Christianity being in a different religion school ( <i>school where multireligion approach is adopted</i> ) is there. So if you are a Christian everyone is getting an opportunity to hear it as well as everyone getting an opportunity to hear about Judaism or Buddhism. And that is when your choice is having to decide whether to go in that direction, but at least they were given that choice and that means that Christianity becomes a choice in some schools where it might not have been. JJ: So you are saying that everyone is getting a fair platform, in a sense. L: Ja, and then you will have your family background and parental control. I think in some cases where it does play a role, is in the choices that a child has to make ( <i>pause</i> ) yet you have exposed ( <i>the learners</i> ) nonetheless to all these religions. A1: It also gives you the opportunity to at the end to make your choice because you know about every religion and you know what you feel comfortable with and what you can take ownership of.

<p>JJ: As a teacher, having an understanding of 'religious freedom', how do you think this can impact your teaching in the classroom?</p>	<p>S: I think that you won't have a very biased outlook on religion and you won't be thinking: "now I am a Christian." I would not be thinking every body else is going to hell. I would have a different look at understanding, and obviously I won't be, even the way I teach. In most cases if you are a Christian and you are in a Christian school you would be teaching like a Christian teacher and then the other children would obviously question their religion and if you have religious freedom you would know that this is how I would get the information and they would then get a chance to choose, and obviously as 'L' has said depending on family and other things that might influence their choice.</p>
	<p>L: Being a Christian myself, it depends on the educator's religious belief. I strongly believe that is where your approach as to how you are going to teach is going to come from and then I think it is how you are going to respect other religious beliefs. Because you could just say you know that I am not prepared to teach another religion or you could say in my belief, like personally I do, I believe you have to respect all religions. For me I would rather let my children know and teach them how to respect and also and that is where I will base my stand from. So that is just personally, but not every person is the same. Some other person would say as a Christian may say that I refuse to do this, I will not teach about other religions because I don't believe in it.</p> <p>A1: (Earnestly) If you as a religious person do not know about the other religions you have no leg to stand on to explain yours. So if I was trying to speak to a new age follower that this is where I am coming from and I understand where you are coming from lets work out where we are similar and where we are different and why we are different and why we are similar. Because if you are not aware of it then you are an ignorant believer in your own faith, you are very blind-sided. So, now if you are teaching in a school, if you at least know why a kid has said something regarding their religion you know how to respond to it. If you don't know about it and you have not taught them they are going to be very ignorant people. The last thing you want is to run around saying I am a Christian and I have no idea what you are. You know. So I know enough about other religions but I would like to know more. So I am an admitted ignorant person when it comes to bigger details but I do know the general gist of things, which isn't enough.</p> <p>L: But as an educator it is good for us to know, (because) the kids ask the teacher because the teacher knows everything. So I mean that is the way they think. So it is good for us.</p>
<p>JJ: So would you say that you have used this approach to RE?</p> <p>JJ: What would you understand by Religious Instruction?</p>	<p>L: Ja.</p> <p>A1: To teach specifics about religion. How to read it, how to write it. Why it is where it is.</p> <p>A2: That is the one and the only</p> <p>S: Very formatted.</p>

<p>JJ: And which of the two approaches is pertinent to the South African classroom?</p>	<p>A1 Religion Education. Instruction would be for like your own personal meeting place. L: It is like indoctrination</p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that it is possible to teach human rights and, specifically the right to 'religious freedom' through RE?</p>	<p>L: I think it is. I think that if you are teaching religious freedom then there is other human rights that I need to make myself more aware of, that you bring across you know. The right to a freedom of choice and to education. Your heritage and that they tie into that, they are not separate to it. A1: I mean your freedom of speech would come directly from your religion and there are a couple of others which are very specific to religion which actually in a way does not separate the law from the church. To some extent there will always be a Christian based law / legal system.</p>
<p>JJ: What teaching strategies do you think would be particularly appropriate for teaching RE?</p>	<p>A2: Group activities because then the kids get together in their group and their group give feedback on what they do and how they do things. A1: Discussion and while you are having your discussions in that group you have to be tolerant so you are practising what you are preaching. A2: Right, and it is a very relaxed atmosphere. A1: And it always finishes up with the teacher putting on the board.</p>
<p>JJ: Do you feel equipped to facilitate RE in the classroom?</p>	<p>A2: I think we do have lots of resources. I also think that it is your responsibility. If you know you are going to do a certain section with the kids you have to make sure that you are on your toes and you know what you are going to say. Otherwise you are not only confusing yourself but also the kids. And I think we have got resources that we can use.</p>
<p><b>Clustered IQs (9 - 12)</b></p>	<p><b>IM → ATQ2:</b> How does teacher's biographical context impact on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?</p>
<p>JJ: How do you think your own biography influences your understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'? Think about the way you grew up.</p>	<p>S: <i>(Animatedly)</i> When I grew up we practised traditional ancestral <i>(religion)</i> and we were Christian. I remember my mom was Christian but my dad was very traditional. I mean he got cuts from Nyangas and stuff. For me it was negative I did not enjoy it. I never understood why it was done but prayer seemed like the sensible thing to do. It was painless. No evil man coming with razors to cut you. For me I liked Christianity from the go. When I got to my teens I got to explore and I got to understand that it was a relationship. More than when I was growing up as I had to go to Sunday school and I had to live a certain way. When I became a teenager and when my dad converted as well I had freedom to visit other churches and to find out about Christianity and to understand that it is a relationship that you have with God. And that you are not always right as opposed to what I grew up knowing. Black people usually practise both and it is always a contradiction. Either you do this or this happens and you are not allowed to make mistakes. And you are not allowed to be at a spiritual low or a spiritual high you have got to be just perfect all the time.</p>

<p>JJ: So how does this which you have explained to us, influence your understanding of 'religious freedom'?</p>	<p>S: <i>(reflective pause)</i> It has made me to know that what I have chosen was for real. Because I have had an opportunity to know thoroughly about where I come from and where my ancestors came from and why they did what they did now I know that I don't like it. And it does not work for me. And I have had an opportunity in living in South Africa to find out about other religions and now I know that that does not work for me either. I had all the information and I was able to pick Christianity as what worked for me.</p>
<p>JJ: So would you say for someone like yourself, A2, that this whole idea of 'religious freedom' is more difficult to understand or buy into?</p>	<p>A2: I think as a child yes, but as you grow older, where you have got more of your own life ... <i>(hesitation)</i> my parents never said you have to go to church. Maybe for Sunday school but as you grew older you were given the choice and you decide whether you wanted to carry on going to church, or go to another church, so it was never forced on us and I mean remember studying we went to churches with friends so we took turns to going to a different church and yet I felt comfortable about where I came from and I never doubted. I think also studying and getting a background as part of our studies we were very informed about all religions. I mean it was very intense where we had to, it was a compulsory subject that we had to take as well ... <i>(reflective pause)</i> and I mean respecting people for what they believe and why as much as I feel comfortable in my religion so they feel in theirs.</p> <p>L: <i>(L straightened in her posture and interjected animatedly)</i> Can I share something? This is quite a big story but I will do it quickly. Both my parents grew up Hindu and my mom decided she would become a catholic just before I was born. So I was born into a half-catholic half-Hindu home. Shortly after that I remember going to catechism and doing the whole works and believed that I was going to become a nun. And shortly before I chose my final calling my parents decided that we are going to go to a Pentecostal church. So I used to go to catechism and Sunday school. Let's just say I was very grounded. And I have got family the majority of whom at that time were Hindu. And we had Muslim friends and family and there is this whole mix of things so I think that is where for me, growing up, I was made my decision in my early teens that this is what I am going to do. Did have a very strict Christian home but I did go through that time in my life where I had to make that decision. Not just in my teens when I made the decision but later on when I was getting married. But I still maintained my position because of like you say the biography that you grew up in and that is why now I would rather respect every person's religion and choice because of the walk that I have had in such exposure.</p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that your own religious affiliation in any way impacts on your facilitating RE?</p>	<p>A1: When I taught in my first year here I think that it does because when someone asks you a question on Christianity you like – you know what to say. If someone asks you something on a different religion you are like, well let's explore that, you are thumb-sucking because you don't really know what you are talking about if you have not sat down and done that research and know what is potting <i>(what it all means)</i>.</p>

	<p>A2: I think it does. You know the ins and outs of your religion but with another you know more or less but you don't know in depth.</p> <p>L: <i>(interjecting)</i> and you sort of guard yourself with what you are saying because you don't want to step on toes and offend a child or somebody. So you go the guarded route.</p> <p>A1: Um, I know when I was growing up my mom and dad were just good people. We did not go to church or any religious thing. It was like this is how you behave and how you do things. Not because God is going to get you or whoever is going to get you just that is not the way you should do it. So I was very respectful and mindful and scared of my parents in various incidences, and then um I started going to youth with a friend of mine and then they <i>(parents)</i> started going to church and then we all started going to church. My parents were not specifically Christians or not beforehand, that I found out, but they had their own biographies that were dictating how they were behaving then. So my Mom was a Christian but not in a very let's go to church kind of way. I think my dad was too in his own little way. They never made that let's do this with our kids kind of thing.</p> <p>A2: <i>(Earnestly)</i> I grew up with a very strong Christian faith. I mean my grandparents on either <i>(both)</i> sides. My parents were very involved in the church from small. I mean we were baptized at a few months old. Very staunch as well. I did experience going to other churches but yet I never felt comfortable in that church. I mean kids were baptized, when they decide they are ready for it. Coming from there as well you decide where you are comfortable. I grew up with reading bible stories before going to bed, praying before you eat, before you go to bed, family bible study and I think that has always been Christianity. I never wanted to find another religion. Probably also ignorance because I wasn't exposed to anything else. The community I grew up in as well, there were only Christians, you did not have any other religions.</p>
<p>JJ: 'S' do you feel threatened in your own faith, or feel like you have to compromise your own beliefs in order to promote 'religious freedom'?</p>	<p>S: It depends. I feel that by promoting religious freedom I don't promote Buddhism or all other religions in SA, I am promoting knowledge of it. So it does not have to infringe on any of my beliefs. As long as I understand it, it is passing knowledge on to these children. I am not telling them what to do. So that is how I try to separate the two. <i>(anxious facial expression)</i> But if I had an understanding that I am now teaching them and telling them that they can become whatever they want to become then I really feel very compromised. But at times you do because everywhere you go you feel like I should be sharing Christ with everyone so there is a small degree of feeling like I am compromising.</p> <p>L: <i>(Perplexed)</i> I have such mixed emotions on this one. I do feel to an extent I do compromise my beliefs, but on the other hand being a strong Christian I feel that I am doing what I should be doing as a Christian person, therefore I did not want to teach at a full Christian private school. I felt that being among people that are non Christians as well I can share something, I have got something to give <i>(hesitation and leaning in to the group)</i> but on the other hand talking about religious freedom I feel I don't give my learners all of</p>

<p>JJ: Do you sometimes feel like you have multiple identities. You are a committed Christian and then you come to school and have to wear another identity?</p>	<p>that freedom yet I am asking them to respect others religions (<i>quick to add</i>) which I do as well. Look they get a day off for Eid which is a way we respect it at our school which is what they are entitled to but there is no other room for that. I personally would be very offended if I allowed a Hindu prayer to be said in my classroom yet I would go full out and say the Lord's Prayer in the classroom. So to an extent I am feel I am not respecting them but at the same time that I am respecting them. So I do feel that I am compromising my beliefs then but not totally my religion.</p> <p>A1: To follow on from that, when I was teaching it I felt I was not being compromised because in an explanation I would say that because in my faith I am a Christian so they knew it and they obviously knew my direction from it and the fact that I am a Christian and I am teaching you about this and this and this, clearly I am respecting you know your freedom, and I am respecting you there. Ummm, and if you were to say the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of the day that is me teaching them to be tolerant of me. That I am saying it for my class, for those of you who are Christians. I am not making you say your own prayer, granted I am not letting you say your own prayer, but I am not forcing it one way or the other. I think I did say it beforehand, um to them, when I did it last year, that if someone has got a problem with it to please come and let me know so that we can deal with it.</p> <p>A2: (<i>Obvious discomfort</i>) I feel both. Yes I feel I am compromising um, the fact that I cannot speak out as freely about my religion. I now have to guard and consider other people around me. Um, whereas on the other side I am still welcome to feel the way I feel and to believe what I believe. I am free to do that. So it is, (<i>emphasis</i>) it is very difficult because you have to respect on the one side but you also want to be respected. So it is not always easy. Especially when you feel strongly about something not to come out and say this is what I feel about my religion.</p> <p>A1: Especially with parents. And with the children as well.</p> <p>L: About a month ago we had an incident where the one child called another two girls evil and you praise the devil, you are not going to church. And you have to deal with this in the most comfortable way for everyone so that everyone is happy at the end of it yet you know where your stand is.</p> <p>A1: You might not agree with it yourself yet you have it, in order to keep peace and learn to respect each other you have got to maintain that.</p>
<p><b>Clustered IQs (6 - 8, 16 - 23)</b></p>	<p><b>IM → ATQ3:</b> How does the school context in which teachers operate, influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?</p>
<p>JJ: How is the religion education which the children receive at this school facilitated? Would you say it is RE or Religious Instruction?</p>	<p>S: I think very much it is education because the children are aware that they are different. For me I thought that the Policy wants it and I am very comfortable doing it so I found it more productive or children responded better to it and they were able to tell me. I remember doing a heritage mini project that they did for me where they told me where they had come from and then it helped us as a class as grade 6s to understand 'so and so' coming from Hinduism ... I remember when we started all the Christian kids thinking</p>

	<p>that they (<i>the Hindus</i>) were evil. So I said, guys, lets listen to each other they also think that we are evil and what we are doing is wrong but lets us try and understand where they are coming from different backboards (<i>backgrounds</i>) and it has really helped because their attitudes and comments have got more respect now. We have moved away from labelling each other and that they must convert.</p> <p>A1: (<i>Interjection</i>) Question, when did the problem in L's class where one of the boys was shouting: "You are evil, you are evil, you are going to hell". Was that before or after?</p> <p>S: It was before. And after, I promise you there just so much peace. A person could tell me about a festival or a prayer they want to go to. And we all want to know in the class room. Why do we do that prayer? So when a person is dead ... how many prayers do you do? But it will no longer be "that is evil, you are going to hell". And I even told the Christian children that if your aim is to convert people you need to understand where they are coming from and through your love they can convert. And that is what Christianity is about that they convert people to Christ through understanding and loving them. And they got that. I am glad.</p>
<p>JJ: What has been the reaction to multireligion education from parents, pupils and members of the community (possibly from different faith groups / organizations)?</p>	<p>A2: I have reactions from parents but it was about two years ago where we did give a LO project about examining different religions. The parent was very unhappy about it. He felt that being a Christian school where we had a Christian ethos he did not want to have his child to exposed to it. If you tell my child about things like this he is going to try and experiment. I told him that if your foundation at home is good enough and strong enough then your child will not doubt his religion and will not try other things. Yes he might try but he knows that is what he is comfortable with. It is difficult because we live in a society where there is not just one religion but we still have to, although we are a Christian school, we have to expose the children to other religions because we are not all Christians in the school. It is difficult – keeping everybody happy but still keeping our values as a Christian school.</p> <p>L: We say we are a Christian school and we are all very comfortable with that and most of the educators are practising Christians and we must not also not forget that it is a very strong Christian ethos, but still a government school. And the parents are obviously aware of that and with the new South Africa that we are in there is a fine line that we have to maintain at school to remember to respect those parents, to keep them on your side and to make them feel comfortable. Our school assemblies are obviously Christian and we have an absolutely wonderful time because we are very comfortable with them. A lot of the parents specifically tell their children not to sing the songs or I remember when I started here, 7<sup>th</sup> day Adventists, used to stand outside during assembly and I never knew why until I found out that their parents were strongly against what was going on, so based on all of that you know you do always have your parents who will question it or will want to know what is going on and you have to answer to that.</p> <p>A1: And we still have Jehovah witness children who are not allowed to stay in class parties where kids have birthdays.</p>

	L: And you have to respect that, you have to respect that.
JJ: Do you think that parents and the community have an understanding of what RE entails and how it is incorporated into the broader framework of LO?	<p>A1: I would quite strongly say now because the number of times I have had parents ask me what on earth is going on in this subject. What is reading and writing. I mean any of the reading outcomes of each learning area parents have got no idea, so based on what you are asking, in my head I am thinking we should actually write down what we do in each subject, just a brief summary of why we do this in LO, why we do this in technology, arts and culture so that they are aware of it so that at the beginning of the year they can come in and say I don't want my kid to do this and you have at least got that chance at the beginning of the year to explain why you think they should and what slant you are planning on taking on it. I don't think they know.</p> <p>L: By the time they get from Grade 4 to 6 the parents are sort of aware of what is being covered. Also if the parents themselves are involved in education or are teachers themselves those are the only parents who really know exactly what is to be done.</p>
JJ: Do you feel equipped to facilitate RE in the classroom?	<p>L: I feel I am. I have taught it previously. Apart from having the lifestyle that I have had I like to make myself aware of what is going on. I am that type of person and if I see some material I get myself au fait with it. So I just get to know the gist of it.</p> <p>S: I also feel the same way. I feel that as I am an educator I have got to. You have to know everything and if you don't you would not be doing your job properly and I feel that I am doing my best to get more and more information.</p>
JJ: Do you two feel that there are support structures supporting you to become more equipped?	A2: I think we do have lots of resources. I also think that it is your responsibility. If you know you are going to do a certain section with the kids you have to make sure that you are on your toes and you know what you are going to say. Otherwise you are not only confusing yourself but also the kids. And I think we have got resources that we can use.
JJ: Have you had access to or read the Religion and Education Policy Document (2003)?	<p>L: Yes</p> <p>A2: We had a staff development on it.</p> <p>A1: That part of it yes, but I have not sat down and read it word for word.</p> <p>L: Not the whole thing but we know what is going on there.</p> <p>A1: We went through in grades. We went through the document and decided how we were going to interpret it.</p>
JJ: What, if any, input by the Department of Education has been received in terms of training and support for facilitating RE as part of LO in your particular school?	<p>A2: The book (<i>DoE's teachers' guide for RE Grades 4 – 9</i>) and the posters (<i>DoE posters displaying basic information about the major religions represented in South Africa</i>).</p> <p>A1: (<i>Emphatically</i>) To add onto that with regards to that poster I think that it is definitely preventing anyone who is teaching it from maintaining their own religion in any fashion or form because of that one particular comment where it just says you know what, forget everything I taught you, everyone loves everyone to some extent. Where if you can teach by saying this is one (<i>religion</i>), this is one (<i>another religion</i>), this is one (<i>yet another religion</i>), and when it comes to the faith where you take the best out of all of them and follow that path. It is New Age. And to teach that as an actual faith itself (<i>New Age</i>). Take the best out of everything because when it gets left up in the air that is when it is</p>

	<p>dangerous. When you can concentrate on this faith for these reasons, whether it is food and worship and celebration and break it down and when they ask a question you have a flat out answer. Whereas when it comes to a faith or a movement where you can do what you want there are no concrete answers and that is where the confusion and danger comes in, (<i>determined</i>) so I would not really want to teach that one because I have got no real answers. Personally I prefer to leave that out, or teach the ones where there are real answers and the children have got something to hold on to as opposed to saying “agh, do you know what, I will do it this way and this way and I will duck and dive this and I will just be a nice wonderful person for the rest of my life”. But because you are not teaching them something concrete they are going to turn it into something that it is not.</p> <p><i>*after discussion it became apparent that teachers did not receive the actual policy document (Religion and Education Policy, 2003) but instead, a summary, prepared by management to make it more ‘accessible’, and DoE posters which did not come with an explanation and therefore were open to confusion and misinterpretation.</i></p>
<p>JJ: What possible collaboration is there with LO teachers from other schools?</p>	<p>A2: With the foundation phase yes, because they have got cell group meetings and they have got across the board all the learning areas, but not really LO (<i>foundation grades do Life Skills</i>).</p> <p>A1: In your phase you have got the person in charge of LO and then from every grade, whoever teaches it. And they meet and discuss what grade is going to do what. How they are going to link it.</p>
<p>JJ: In your school, has the approach to religion changed since the introduction to the new Religion and Education Policy (2003)?</p>	<p>A2: I think we decided at one stage that if the Department is going to force us to incorporate certain religions then we are rather going to move away from religion and make a general values assembly and have a general assembly where we won't pray instead of having three or four prayers, and won't sing at all then if it is going to offend anybody and have like a small assembly but not Christian at all and we go from there. But still not allowing other people to come into our school and have prayer meetings and whatever.</p> <p>A1: With the last thing that you were saying there when it comes to assemblies and having to deal with them if we have to combine everyone. Part of my view would be that I would not want to take it out completely and make it like a nice moral time but rather focus in on all the groups that are at school and get them to do a rotation of different assemblies because then you are actually doing religious freedom at the same time. It is 15 minutes where the kids get to say this is me, this is what I am going to try and teach you. Because then people only get a little bit of offence as opposed to not gaining anything from school. Because I mean the amount of times that kids don't get to go to church so assembly time is good for them. There are a couple of kids in the class who don't get to go to their place or worship and they might be depending on school. Just for a little bit. Just for a little bit of SU or a little bit of assembly.</p>

## APPENDIX H

Presentation of data gathered in interview in School B. (Everything printed in italics in this table was edited by the researcher to ensure confidentiality and to add information in the interest of clarity).

Clustered IQs (1 - 5, 13 - 15)	IM → ATQ1: How do the selected teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?
JJ: Z, what do you understand under the term 'religious freedom'?	Z: I think it is the way you communicate with God. Each and everyone is free to choose whichever religion he wants.
JJ: What religions are you aware of in South Africa?	Z: Christianity, ah traditional and Judaism, and Islamic. In this school it is Christian. Seemingly the community of this area are Catholics so even the school was built by the Catholics. It was under the Catholics before the government took over. So it is still functioning that the school belongs to the Catholics. There are other faiths too. As it is, I belong to DCC <sup>106</sup> but others are the Zions, others are Pentecostal. Shembe is also there. If we are having a prayer, most of the time we are asking the Catholics to do it. It is rare to have other denominations coming into the school.
JJ: Do you think that it is important to promote freedom of religion in our schools?	Z: Ja. So we give the other learners a chance. If we speaking one religion the others will feel vindicated ( <i>offended</i> ). So we have to give them a chance. Not to force them to belong to one denomination. Sometimes you find that they are conducting morning assemblies, actually we do conduct the morning devotions daily, each and every educator took five days in the week. So you find some of them being bored because it is not done in their denomination.
JJ: How do you think, according to your understanding of 'religious freedom', it helps someone to teach in the classroom?	Z: ( <i>Emphatic</i> ) It is important because we are living in a democratic country and society so by this you can't talk anyhow. You have to respect the other denominations.
JJ: What do you think is the difference between RE and Religious Instruction?	Z: ( <i>Pensive</i> ) Religious Education it is where you have to tell about God, prayers and all that but with Religious Instruction it is whereby you are being told, you are given instruction about a religion and what to believe.
JJ: Do you think it is possible to teach the right to 'religious freedom' in a	Z: It is possible. It is what we need with Victory ( <i>the NCMI church helping with LO once a week</i> ). There are some topics that

<sup>106</sup> DCC: Durban Christian Centre. This is a Pentecostal Christian Church which meets in the 'Jesus Dome' near Mayville, in Durban.

<p>RE lesson?</p> <p>JJ: That helps as well. I saw the Crossroads programme that they (VFC church) are using.</p> <p>JJ: That programme looks more at the personal development and not really at the physical or the social development. There is no RE in the programme.</p>	<p>we are tackling in groups. So they appreciate it – the learners they appreciate it.</p> <p>Z: Yes, we attended it in Spar it was in town two weekends. When we were there things were just a bit clearer.</p> <p>Z: There is no religion but the way they put it, it is from a Christian perspective.</p>
<p>JJ: What teaching strategies do you use when you teach?</p>	<p>Z: Sometimes we work in groups. Sometimes, um we exchange – they give me the answers. They give me the answers I ask questions. Sometimes they ask questions and I give them answers. The groups are very large. In Grade six there are 165 learners with one teacher (<i>sighs</i>).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Clustered IQs (9 - 12)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IM → ATQ2: How does teacher's biographical context impact on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?</b></p>
<p>JJ: How you grew up as a child, your history, your biography, do you think it influences how you understand 'religious freedom' today?</p>	<p>Z: Ja. My Mum used to on Sundays she woke us up as early as 7am and we had to go to the Sunday schools. Sometimes we had to teach the other learners in the Sunday school, so it made me what I am right now. So it is easy for me to teach about religion because it is something that I have done from old. She was a Christian. She did believe in God.</p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that your own beliefs will impact on the way you will teach, or the way you teach RE?</p> <p>JJ: How do you think you would feel if you had to teach about Hinduism? or Islam?</p> <p>JJ: And if you knew about those other religions, do you think that by teaching the children about what</p>	<p>Z: Seeing as I am in DCC there are a lot of things that happen in my denomination so I think I can explain this to the learners who are not familiar with going to the church because there are those who can't even pray. So right now we have got to promote that. Because for now that is where it starts. To give the kids a chance to pray. The other day the parents that need to pray, as long as they do that then it will be easy for them at school to cope.</p> <p>Z: So I think I would have to go to a school first. To get some books. It is not possible for me to teach it, unless I am familiar with it.</p> <p>Z: (<i>Hesitation</i>) They need to know about other churches. So I gave them. Even the symbol for different churches. They must know that if there is this symbol it means</p>

<p>Muslims believe and Hindus believe, do you think that it would compromise your own faith?</p>	<p>these are the Muslim and all of that.</p>
<p><b>Clustered IQs (6 - 8, 16 - 23)</b></p>	<p><b>IM → ATQ3:</b> How does the school context in which teachers operate influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?</p>
<p>JJ: RE in this school, how is it facilitated? Is it happening? Does it happen in LO?</p> <p>JJ: The Government has said that we need to have a multireligion approach to RE. What has the reaction been if any, from the teachers, or the community?</p>	<p>Z: I can't say it is happening. It is partly done in the morning devotions. It is not stressed in the classroom. It is only those LO teachers maybe who just motivate the kids. If there is a lesson that means it is something in LO.</p> <p>Z: I think that the teachers will be happy because we need to give the learners a chance to see different things. The other day Shembe, the other day it is Christian meeting. The other day it is ... the schools nowadays are multicultural.</p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that the parents and the community have got any idea about RE or LO?</p>	<p>Z: They know vaguely about religions, but LO, no (<i>shakes her head emphatically</i>).</p>
<p>JJ: Have you ever had a chance to read the Religion and Education Policy Document from the Department?</p>	<p>Z: No.</p>
<p>JJ: As far as the KZNDEC is concerned, what kind of support have they given for teaching LO?</p>	<p>Z: They gave us the books (<i>a few GET LO textbooks</i>). The school paid for us to go to a course (<i>organized by VFC – the Crossroads programme</i>). Department paid for accommodation. For transport, the school paid.</p>

## APPENDIX I

Presentation of data gathered in interview in School C (everything printed in italics in this table was edited by the researcher to ensure confidentiality and to add information in the interest of clarity)

<p><b>Clustered IQs (1 - 5, 13 - 15)</b></p>	<p><b>IM → ATQ1:</b> How do the selected teachers voice their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?</p>
<p>JJ: Can I ask you please, there is no particular order and anybody can respond, what you understand under the term 'religious freedom'?</p>	<p>L1: <i>(Confident body language and forcefully takes the lead)</i> Religious freedom is freedom where you express your religious beliefs that you were born and brought up with – um, in the wider context, interactive with other religions and uh, having respect and treating other religions with as much respect and dignity as you would treat your own.</p> <p>M: It would be along the same lines. Uh, like they practise the religion that they are brought up with, and respecting other religions because there are many different practices, especially in this school situation where you have different races and religions and you have to basically respect them.</p> <p>L2: Ja, and you don't have to be confined to only yours because there are so many others so.</p>
<p>JJ: What religions are you aware of that constitute the religious diversity in South African society?</p>	<p>L2: Hinduism. Muslims, Islamic religion. We have not come much into contact with Jewish. Have not interacted with them. That is about it. Buddhism. Ja.</p> <p>L1: I think it is more like Christianity and Islam.</p> <p>L2: <i>(interjecting)</i>... and then of course you have the Zionism.</p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that it is important to promote freedom of religion in South African schools? If so, why?</p>	<p>M: Yes it is because, uh, firstly you must not lose the contact with what you grew up with, and you must have strong faith in what you believe ....</p> <p>L1: <i>(interrupting)</i> sometimes it is easier to interact with other people if you know where you are and where you come from.</p> <p>L2: I believe that uh, that religion in school should be universal. It should be the basic 10 commandments where it is morally correct. But when it comes to specific religions, being practised in schools sometimes there is friction because a lot of children and educators most probably want to resist some forms of faith so um what may be offensive to</p>

	you may be my religious practice. So to avoid that there should be more of a universal values kind of thing.
JJ: What do you think is the difference between RE and Religious Instruction?	M: I think Religious Instruction comes from, for instance if you are a Christian, from home. You read the Bible and you put your prayers or worship, whereas religious education basically is informing everybody about the different religions and not going so in depth. L1: <i>(Emphatic)</i> I think RE is informing learners about all the different religions that you come across but religious instruction is where one form of religion is practised. That is how I see it.
JJ: Do you think it is possible to teach human rights and specifically the right to 'religious freedom' through RE?	L2: Yes, but it must go with responsibilities. L1: It is a human right to practise your religious beliefs and also the responsibility to respect ( <i>other religions</i> ).
JJ: What teaching strategies do you think would be particularly appropriate when teaching RE?	L2: I think first of all there should be group discussions, and where they are made aware by learners themselves speaking about different religions. So that you don't look down on other religions with disrespect – that everyone is important and deserves respect. With group discussions you can do this. Where you have one scribe and the rest participate and you have interaction between the different groups.
<b>Clustered IQs (9 - 12)</b>	<b>IM → ATQ2:</b> How does teacher's biographical context impact on their understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?
JJ: How do you think your own biography influences your understanding of the human right to 'religious freedom'?	M: <i>(Enthusiastically)</i> I think, firstly I was taught to respect all religions. Now I come from a Hindu home so we have you know a temple and you have to walk into the temple in my home you won't only find things of our own worship because in our temple we have a frame of mother Mary holding baby Jesus and even in our songs we sing the name of Allah, we sing the name of Jesus we sing the name of Buddha. So I don't feel that I have a problem growing up because I had friends from other religions, my best friend was Muslim. L2: <i>(In agreement with M and equally enthusiastically)</i> I think mine as well because I think growing up we were also taught to respect, you know, don't disrespect other religions. And in school from a primary level there was just

	<p>everyone. There was no one – you weren't cast aside because you weren't from a certain religion.</p> <p>L1: <i>(Sits back comfortably in her chair)</i> I come from Sherwood where we had a communal type of living there where my neighbour was more my uncle and sort of my relative whether he was a Christian or whether he was a Tamil-speaking person it was like everyone was together. We used to attend Sunday school even though I was of the Hindu religion. I attended Sunday school when I was little. We used to attend the Christmas plays. I used to practice in that. And in school when I was little, I think that because my Form teacher was of a Christian faith so we had these plays at the end of the year and I used to participate in them and my mother did not have a problem with that. There was religious tolerance where we could go into an Islamic home and everybody was everybody's relative there. That was the kind of background I have come from.</p> <p>M: <i>(Questioning facial expression)</i> But don't you think now it is different?</p> <p>L1: Now it is different. Ja. It is becoming polarized now <i>(long pause)</i> let me tell you something that these children they come from different backgrounds but many of them if you ask them to speak to you about African traditional customs, very few of them know it. Because they are assimilating Christianity <i>(another pause)</i> I think that's because of the breakdown of families <i>(the extended family)</i>. We have single unit families. That is the major cause of the breakaway. It is not only with the Black communities but also the Indian community. Lawlessness is, the drugs, very materialistic. Where materialism means more to them than practising the faith <i>(looks around at the group)</i> you know with communal living you had elders there where you were always accountable for your behaviour where at the moment there is no accountability. There is an element of lawlessness.</p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that your own religious affiliation in any way impacts on your facilitating RE?</p>	<p>L1: When it comes to teaching RE I think basically it is values education that we teach. It is just uh, and learners are so curious you know, they want to know. They are so fascinated when they hear about Hindus, Islam and why is it that one has images and so many gods and</p>

	<p>one has no religious symbol at all.</p> <p>M: <i>(Proceeds to animatedly tell the group about a group of private school that teach that there is only one religion and that that is the religion of love- not relevant to the discussion in question).</i> There are many, can I say, Black pupils, from the underprivileged areas that attend this school and the majority of them I would say are Christian, so there is a huge Christian population in this school <i>(then proceeds to mention schools in America which have no bearing on this discussion!)</i>.</p> <p>L1: <i>(Shows her knowledge about the schools 'M' is describing)</i> In fact they are the schools practising a universal religion.</p> <p><i>There was consensus amongst the respondents that they don't feel threatened in their own faith by investigating other faiths.</i></p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that it is possible to learn from the views and practices of others without compromising your own beliefs?</p>	<p>L1: <i>(Quick to respond before the other respondents)</i> Yes because I think the basic 10 commandments are practised in every religion. It is all about life skills, you know love, peace and it's universal. Religion is actually universal. And then you find there is specialization. There are certain unique characteristics about it.</p> <p>M: <i>(Adds)</i> each religion has its own unique characteristics...</p> <p>L1: <i>(Interjects)</i> the basic principle is, you know, um, to get the society to comply and to do the ethically and morally correct thing.</p>
<p>Clustered IQs (6 - 8, 16 - 23)</p>	<p>IM → ATQ3: How does the school context in which teachers operate, influence their understanding of 'religious freedom'?</p>
<p>JJ: How is the RE teaching that children receive in this school facilitated?</p> <p>JJ: Would you say that in the eastern languages classes Religious Instruction takes place because the learners are taught the culture, religion as well as the language?</p>	<p>L2: It is taught by the LO teachers that we have where we do all the different religions. We give them a general, um, background of all the basic, um, teachings of each religion. It is not enforcing religious practice, rather, just making them aware that outside their religious beliefs, there are others.</p> <p>L1: I don't think that it is religious as such. It is, uh, basically teaching more the language. I think the emphasis is on the language rather than the religion. I don't think it is cultural. Just teaching them the linguistics.</p>

<p>JJ: What has been the reaction to this multireligion education from parents, learners and members of the community?</p>	<p>M: I think they most probably are happy with it due to the fact that, for example if you come from a Hindu home the fact that in school you are being taught about other religions that are there.</p> <p>L1: Because as you go you tend to forget all these things.</p> <p>M: And the fact that you are in an institution like school or University, you come across various different religions and you are not going to have friends that belong to one religion, so you have to know about other religions in order to respect it more.</p> <p>L1: This is like a microcosm of the society in general. When you go out into the world this is what you are going to experience but on a wider scale. You know.</p>
<p>JJ: Do you think that the parents and the community have an understanding of what RE entails and how it is incorporated into the broader framework of LO?</p>	<p>L1: I don't think so. Maybe I would say that a few parents would be clued up. But as far as the learning areas in school go, parents have very little idea.</p> <p>(Told they need to be back in classrooms. Before they leave the researcher confirms that there is no collaboration with LO teachers from other schools and that this school is completely in favour of promoting 'religious freedom'.)</p>

**APPENDIX J**

**Certificate for language editing**

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***DECLARATION***

**Language editing of Master's dissertation**

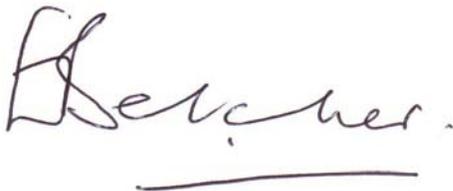
Title

THE VOICE OF THE TEACHER IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS  
FREEDOM: A KWAZULU-NATAL CASE STUDY

Candidate

Janet Jarvis

It is hereby declared that this thesis was properly language edited by Mrs E Belcher.



*Ella Belcher.*

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Stellenbosch  
22 October 2007

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