

# TEACHING ZAMBIAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Dr Austin Cheyeka** is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Zambia in the School of Education. His research interest is the relationship between religion and society. His email address is [acheyeka@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:acheyeka@yahoo.co.uk)

## Abstract

*Trainers of Religious Education (RE) teachers in Zambia have not seriously thought about and articulated the teaching of Zambian Traditional Religions (ZTRs) in RE. No doubt they have familiarised trainee RE teachers with 'neutral', 'plural', 'confessional', 'phenomenological', 'personalist' and 'existential' and other approaches to teaching RE, but there is still a huge problem with the teaching of ZTRs. This article intends to discourage teachers from teaching ZTRs as if they were Christianity. The article brings to the fore a real problem in 21<sup>st</sup> century Zambian education system and advances the view that ZTRs should be taught as they are, without simultaneously comparing them to other religions. Even the argument that ZTRs have changed and have been Christianised does not at all warrant teachers to present ZTRs to learners in the Christian idiom.*

## Introduction

RE is a traditional subject in Zambia in the sense that since the introduction of formal western education, it has been part of the school curriculum. But the teaching of it is relatively new. The wrong approach to the teaching of ZTRs derives mainly from the literature available, which largely and initially comes from anthropologists. It is also a result of the fact that teachers fail to be neutral. Some teachers become emotionally charged when explaining to the learners about how ZTRs were stereotyped by some early Christian missionaries and early 19<sup>th</sup> century social scientists. Others have, on the contrary, swallowed the line, sinker and hook of negative western description of ZTRs and present them as 'lesser religions'.

My focus however, is on those teachers who, in the frantic efforts of trying to correct disparaging remarks about ZTRs create the impression in the learners that ZTRs are the same as Christianity or Judaism. One example that immediately comes to my mind is that of equating the migration of the Luba-Lunda people into Central Africa to the migration of the Hebrew people from Egypt to Canaan. Surely, these are totally different kinds of migration in two totally different contexts. Most unfortunate, even theologians from whom materials for RE come, continue to write about their indigenous religions using Christian categories and anthropological insights. They are justified in many ways because of the limited sources of information on African Traditional Religions (ATRs). But as P'bitek (1971: 50) argues, this does not help in understanding the nature of ATRs as African peoples conceive them. However, P'bitek's arguments have not made much difference in the scholarship on ATRs.

The central argument in this article is that ZTRs should first of all be presented as ZTRs before comparing them to other religions because one of the attitudes RE teachers and lecturers should aim to develop in the learners is the willingness on the part of the learners to acknowledge the controversial and ambiguous nature of many issues about beliefs and values.

## **The Origins of Terms: ATR and ZTRs**

I have deliberately avoided using the term ATR because I want to be very specific (hence, the use of ZTRs). Nevertheless, I will first of all show how the term ATR itself came about. The inventor of the term in the singular was a primitive Methodist Church minister, Rev Edwin Smith (1876-1957). He was among other things, a linguist who had come to work among the Ila in Zambia. He came to the realisation that the Ila had an awareness of some kind of spiritual force, but he was unsure whether to call the Ila religious or not. After living among them for thirteen years, Smith reacted against his contemporaries, who thought that Africans did not have a religion (Van Rinsum, 2004: 36-61). Smith's argument was that the Ila knew God, but needed to be directed to Him by missionaries. He also rejected the idea of James Frazer that religion is an abstract philosophical concept (Frazer, 1922). Instead, he used Schleiermacher's less known definition of religion to describe the spirituality of the Ila. Schleiermacher (1958) had defined religion as an emotion that consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence.

After Edward Geoffrey Simons Parrinder's (usually known as Geoffrey Parrinder, 1910-2005) publication of *African Traditional Religion* in 1954, which constituted a landmark text, even though it was eventually eclipsed by John Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969), Smith's concept of ATR became well known in the academic circles. Parrinder tried to show that African religion as a conceptual unity could contribute to the understanding of world religions such as Christianity and Islam, which were believed to be rooted in ATR. Parrinder started to universalise particular elements in different ATRs and presented them as one singular or in the plural. With Mbiti's influential book, some scholars began to think that the Africans (specifically the Bantu) had a common worldview, but their religions were fundamentally different. Today, scholars are heavily divided over the use of singular (ATR) and plural (ATRs) when referring to Bantu religions.

## **Defining ATRs and ZTRs in Religious Education**

In the personalist and existentialist approach developed in Britain, RE offers itself as a contribution to the young person's quest for meaning in life. This approach does not fit the definition of religion in the Zambian context in which the definition of religion is that of Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, the 19<sup>th</sup> century anthropologist who said religion is a belief in the existence of an invisible world, often thought to be inhabited by spirits that are believed to affect people's lives in the material world. In my view, Ellis and Ter Haar (2004: 3) have convincingly argued why Tylor's definition fits the African (and Zambian) context.

1. Many people in the world are religious in as much as they believe it is possible to communicate with a perceived world of spirits.
2. It incorporates practices often referred to as 'magic' or 'superstition' or in similarly value-laden terms, the use of which often incorrectly excludes certain forms of religious expression from qualifying as religion at all.

3. It avoids attributing a moral value to any particular type of belief.
4. It implies that religion is not always in pursuit of what is noble or good - it may include both constructive and destructive practices.
5. It does not define religion almost exclusively in terms of a search for meaning in life.

Beliefs in ATRs include beliefs in witchcraft, nature spirits, lineage spirits, territorial spirits, the unique spirit (God) and so on. Clearly, ATRs cannot possibly be defined in the same way as Christianity, Islam or Hinduism. RE teachers should not follow too strictly the definitions of theologians who have Christianised ATRs.

### **A Critique of Theologians Writing on ATRs**

A general critique of some African theologians is important and perhaps the best way to begin this critique is to point out the issue on which one would differ with some, if not all of them. For example, there are problems with how theologians present belief in God in ATRs and the position of lineage spirits in the ATRs' pantheon. I argue that the erroneous presentation of the two has a myriad of implications on other central topics such as sacrifice, offering, morality and ethics.

Let me give what I will call the development of African scholarship on ATRs so as to enable the reader to see the erroneous presentation of ATRs by some theologians. P'bitek (1970: 40-44) works out a kind of continuum on which he places categories of scholars who have written about ATRs. He begins with those he calls 'Christian apologists', describing them as mounting a counter-attack on the unbelievers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He then slots in the category of African nationalists fighting a defensive battle against what he describes as the vicious onslaught on African cultures by western scholarship. Lastly, he has a category of missionaries who he says have been scheming a dialogue between Christianity and the Bantu religions. In his analysis, P'bitek concludes that all three groups are reactions, and heavily influenced, limited and controlled by the force against which they react.

In the first category, P'bitek (1971: 40-41) fits in Evans Pritchard, Godfrey Lienhardt and Geoffrey Parrinder. He describes their task as that of proving to those who doubted that the Christian God does exist, and is known also among African peoples. They use deities to do so. Those who doubted and expressed their doubt in writings include Edward Tylor, James Frazer, Robert Marret, Bronislaw Malinowski, Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud. Talking about the works of the six, Pritchard (1965: 15) says:

They sought and found in primitive religions a weapon which could, they thought, be used with deadly effect against Christianity. If primitive religion could be explained away as an intellectual aberration, as a mirage induced by emotional stress, or by its social function, it was implied that the higher religions could be discredited and exposed in the same way.

In the second category on the continuum, P'bitek (1970: 40) brings in Jomo Kenyatta, J.B. Danquah, Leopold Senghor and John Mbiti. Bolaji Idowu, Charles Nyamitti, John Mugambi and many others may be added to the list as well. They all protest against any western scholar who describes African cultures and religions in disparaging terms. They attempt to show that the

African peoples were as 'civilised' as the western peoples were. P'bitek (1970: 41) accuses them of dressing up African deities with Hellenic robes and parading them before the western world. The third and last category is that of Rev Edwin Smith, Rev John Taylor and Fr. Placide Tempels who attempt to assure the Africans that earlier generations of anthropologists erred grievously when they reported that African people were mere 'pagan savages', and assert that Africans are, as they have always been, highly religious and moral people.

There are problems with P'bitek categories on the chain of evolution of scholarship on ATRs. I, myself, would have the third category in second position and the second in the third. Also, Pritchard and Parrinder would be operating in all, and so would Smith, Tylor and Tempels. African theologians draw on their ideas. P'bitek himself is also operating within the nationalistic framework. Although he does not romanticise the African past and ATRs, he is certainly in the nationalists' camp because he is also contesting some of the interpretations of African religions by his Oxford teachers, Pritchard and Lienhardt. In his preface to *African Religion in Western Scholarship*, he says: 'I would like to thank my Oxford teachers, especially Professor Evans Pritchard, Dr Godfrey Lienhardt and Dr John Brattie for their personal friendship, and for the challenge they threw at me.' But one has to be careful when reading his work because he claims to be an atheist. He says: 'I am not a religious person - neither pagan nor Christian. I do not believe in gods or spirits - holy or evil. I do not believe that souls or ghosts exist. I do not believe in supernatural forces' (P'bitek, 1971: 8). Was he implying that Africans were atheists before the introduction of Christianity and Islam to them?

In 1962, Parrinder warned African nationalist scholars not to glorify the past so much so that they come to believe that African religions might naturally have developed by themselves to the heights of Christianity (P'bitek, 1970: 47). This warning has not been taken seriously. Part of the problem has been, as Schreier (1985: 9) points out, 'local leaders [theologians, teachers and others] have been trained to use western categories to give expression to the factors shaping the world view of their people.' Schreier (*ibid*) gives the example of Charles Nyamitti, who, in his early works, called for the use of local materials to construct a philosophical system parallel to the Neo-Thomist ones he has learned at the University of Louvain.

The African theologian is caught in a complex predicament. On one hand, he or she wants to defend his or her ancestors' religions and on the other, he or she does not want to look traditionalist and Africanist, and, therefore, 'uncivilised' and 'un-Christianised'. This may explain why Idowu (1973: 106) suggests that: 'If there are any values by which the present generations are living, if there is any heritage from the past which is spiritually and morally potent for today, these are the things to be researched into, refined if need be, for posterity.'

What I have been talking about so far has been the evolution of the study of ATRs. I have pointed out that there have been 'encounter' reporting and 'counter' reporting. That is, the first scholars to write on ATRs have had their perceptions and conclusions checked by others, especially by Africans imbued with nationalistic and Africanist spirit and opposing the 'civilising mission' of the west. In what follows, I want to bring out two key problems in the presentation of ZTRs in RE. What do we tell our learners about God in ZTRs and what do we tell them about the ancestors? Who are the ancestors, deities, gods, spirits, ancestral spirits, living dead, shades, refractions and so on, and what role(s) do they play in the communities?

## **Mistakes made in teaching about ATR/ZTR**

### *Use of wrong terms*

There is no consensus on the use of the terms, such as ancestral spirits, lineage spirits, spirits and so on. Ancestral spirits exclude brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, and limit this group of spirits to parents, grand parents and the direct line of forbearers. It seems, however, that the Bantu-speaking people count all the dead relatives as lineage spirits and so Mbiti (1969: 85) condemned the use of ‘ancestors’ and ‘ancestral spirits’. As a replacement, he suggested the term, ‘living dead’. His proposal was not widely accepted. Zahan (1979) continued using the word ‘ancestors’. Colson (1962) used the vernacular word *Mizimu* because she could not find any exact translation for it. But later she (1971) made use of the term ‘shades’ and even later used the term ‘ancestors’. In her overall understanding of *Tonga Religious Life in the Twentieth Century* (2006), Colson uses the vernacular *Mizimu*. Van Binsbergen (1981) used ‘ancestral spirits’. Vansina (1980) used separate terms, ‘spirits’ (to mean heroes) and ‘ancestral spirits’ (all dead relatives). It would appear that the term ‘lineage spirits’ would define *mizimu*, *azimu*, *imipashi*, *akishi*.

The Bantu who now inhabit areas south of the Sahara came from Cameroon-Nigeria area in West Africa and linguists have determined that the Bantu languages originated in the Benue valley, Nigeria (Vansina, 1990: 49). *Azimu*, *imipashi*, *badimo*, *balimu* are derived from *dimu* or *dzimu*; a proto-Bantu name coming originally from the verb *dim* (*ukushima/tima*) as when a fire goes out, leaving ashes, which remain as a sign and the memory of the fire (Vansina, 1990: 297). It would be useful, therefore, for learners to know the meaning and origins of all these names. But I am not going to get into that in this particular article.

### *The Position of Mizimu in the African Pantheon*

I would like to deal with this section in an extended way because teachers are not teaching the learners the correct position of the *mizimu* in the African pantheon. Nearly all teachers tell pupils that the *mizimu* are intermediaries between God and human beings, which is totally wrong. At play is the Christian belief that Jesus Christ is the way to God. So, Christians make prayers to God through Jesus Christ. I will therefore dwell on the wrong view that the *mizimu* are mediums between God and people. I will address this problem by using the phenomenon and practice of sacrifice and offering.

There are two theories employed in the study of Bantu sacrifice and offering. The first theory is the *Deus Otiosus* theory. Appearing in the 1920s, it was patronised by Mircea Eliade. According to the theory, Africans conceive God as retiring into the sky after creation, leaving the running of the world into the hands of ancestral spirits. God is not, therefore, involved in the day-to-day affairs of human beings, and He is not given sacrifice. The second theory is the mediumistic theory which was popularised in the 1950s through the research on the Nuer of Sudan by Evans Pritchard. This theory states that the gods and ancestors who receive frequent sacrifices are intermediaries between God and man so that any sacrifice offered to them is offered ultimately to God. According to Pritchard (1956: 200) ‘these spirits may be regarded as hypotheses, representatives of refractions of God. So, we can say that a sacrifice to any one of them is a sacrifice also to God.’

Words worth noting are ‘may be regarded’ that Pritchard uses. One would take it that he is not claiming that the Nuer are conscious of the concept of ‘intermediaries’. Was he or was he not

attributing the concept to the conscious apprehension of the Nuer or to the structure of their thought and imagery? In any case, Mbiti (1969: 58) does not doubt the concept of intermediaries among the Bantu. He argues:

In some cases, sacrifices and offerings are directed to one or more of the following: God, spirits and living dead. Recipients in the second and third categories are regarded as intermediaries between God and men, so that God is the ultimate recipient whether or not the worshippers are aware of that.

Mbiti's words cannot, at any rate, be taken as representing the Bantu's own perception of sacrifice and offering. On what evidence is it based? And isn't there a clear cut distinction between offering and sacrifice in Bantu religions? Mbiti himself (1969: 58) has argued that indeed there is a difference. According to him, sacrifice refers to cases where animal life is destroyed in order to present the animal, in part or in whole, to God, supernatural beings, spirits or the living dead.

The important thing we can assert when teaching about sacrifice and offering is that they are a cultic action and most potent in establishing communication with the lineage spirits. So, to state that sacrifices and offerings are ultimately dedicated to God misleads the learner. I have been fascinated by my students' disappointment with any hint to the unclear position of God in Bantu thought. Many student teachers and trained teachers still refuse to accept the fact that the early Christian missionaries helped the Bantu to have a clearer view of the High Spirit after the deconstruction and diabolisation of the African pantheon.

Which model or theory should we adopt in the study of sacrifice and offering then? I would suggest that we take the *Deus Otiosus* theory. One obvious reason this theory should be the starting point for the study of sacrifice and offering is that African myths about God talk about Him retiring into the skies. However, some scholars think that the theory exhibits a basic weakness in failing to recognise God's active involvement in daily human affairs-an important thought of most African religious systems. In the same vein, some people think that the mediumistic theory reduces ancestors to mere mediums who may not be entitled to receive veneration from man.

Let me attempt to justify the *Deus Otiosus* theory. Many scholars have described African religions as two tiered (Horton, 1971; Carmody, 1994). They argue that Africans believe in a high God and in the lesser spirits [lineage spirits]. The lesser spirits are said to underpin the day-to-day life of the people. This is important to note, and this religious fact can be sought in the social setting of Africans. The first dimension of African people's experience of reality is in the field of human relationships. The status and role of every individual is meticulously defined in any given stage of their life. A person's position depends on age, sex, marital status and seniority in relation to the patrilineal order. Consequently, human relationships have become the pivot of man's and woman's relation with the control over the forces of reality.

Consequently, illness, barrenness, drought and other adverse natural phenomena are all ascribed to troubled human relationships, especially within the family, whether between its living members or between them and the ancestral spirits (Nurnberger, 1972: 175). It is thus possible to explain the institution of sacrifice and offering in terms of the belief that the lineage spirits underpin the social order. As Nurnberger (1972: 177-178) argues:

Africans experience, as others do, the apparent loss of presence and influence of a person in case of his death. The ritual investment of the dead with dynamistic power seems to be an unconscious move to counteract the apparent loss of vitality, influence and presence of the deceased, which is so dangerous. Because the living depend on the dead, they keep them in a state of influence and authority.

### ***Bringing God 'Down' to Earth***

In our teaching of ZTRs, we usually 'bring down' the Bantu God and make him immanent, omnipresent and omniscient. This seems to be a problem of approach; wrongly applying Judaeo-Christian thought system to understanding Bantu religious facts. Nurnberger (1972: 186-180) asserts that the relation between God and the ancestors is extremely vague among Bantu people in Africa. The Bantu God is anthropocentric and on the periphery of people's world-view. He is certainly not the Christian Abba Father. Nurnberger supports his argument by giving the example of the Ba Sotho God, *Modimo*:

He does not speak. There is no evidence of a revelation of any sort, whether in dreams, oracles, through prophets or in any other way. *Modimo* extends no claim on the loyalty of man, he gives no commands, he presents no challenge, and he offers no blessings of a verbal kind. He is in some sense at the root of reality as a whole but he is not the foundation or source of man's 'true life' in the religious sense of the word. He does not define man's identity and he does not question man's integrity. He does not confirm man's responsibility. All these normal aspects of religious experience are connected with the life force of the lineage represented by the ancestral spirits, but not with the Supreme Being. The real address of sacrifice and offering would appear to be the ancestral spirits, partly because in ATRs, there are no shrines dedicated to God and there are no so-called traditional priests or priestesses of God.

### ***Using Wrong Names and Deconstructing the African Pantheon***

Meyer (1964: 63) has argued that the translation of the Christian message into vernacular went along with the deconstruction and diabolisation of the old pantheon. Only some deity was classified as belonging to the good side. What is the composition of the pantheon? The pantheon consists of the retiring God and the ancestral spirits and other forms of spirits. It seems that after the diabolisation of the African pantheon, the ancestral spirits were erroneously and quite contradictorily reduced to mediums.

It has been established that the first missionaries in Africa were looking for the Christian God in the belief systems of the people in the way that Saint Paul had selected the 'unknown god' of the Athenians to represent the Judaic God. They found him and brought him down to the people. Bishop Russell, talking about missionaries in Uganda, told P'bitek (1971: 49):

The essence of the Christian message as presented in Uganda has, I would say, been something like this: you believe in a high God, but you believe that God, having made the world, had no further interest in it and is not concerned with your troubles and joys. Our message is about the same God, but that He is

interested, he does care, he does know to the extent of coming into the world and suffering the worst that the world could do to Him.

It is possible that the missionaries' emphasis on the omnipresence of God and the necessity of mediation between God and man, through Christ, led to a sort of degradation and subordination of the ancestors under God. This, perhaps, led to a more definitive and conscious resumption of an originally very vague notion of little existential significance of the African God in many societies (Nurnberger, 1974: 180).

For example, the Bemba did not develop a recognisable taxonomy of spiritual powers, and certainly do not, in the tradition, establish a hierarchy, where one or the other exercises central control or supreme control (Garvey, 1974: 34). It seems the early missionaries used some elements of this consciousness to describe the Christian God to their neophytes who found it difficult to master the essence of Christian theology (Garvey, 1964: 16). In Tongaland, *Leza* became more firmly linked with Christian definitions of God. Only *Leza* of all the spiritual forces recognised by the Tonga was acceptable to the missionaries who chose *Leza* as the Tonga term for God. The existence of *basangu*, *mizimo*, *masabe* was denied by the churches, or they were recognised only as demons to be combated, servants of Satan (a spiritual force previously outside Tonga experience). Only *Leza*, in the guise of the Christian God has been absorbed into the dogmas of Zambian Christianity (Colson, 2004: 2). There is no heaven or hell in ZTRs. The dead in African traditional societies do not go to heaven where they would share God's throne with the angels. The dead join the ancestral lineage and for them to remain there, funeral rites have to be performed and offering made to them from time to time.

## **Implications for Religious Education (RE) and Religious Studies (RS)**

ZTRs are taught in Zambian schools as 'traditional Zambian beliefs'. Cox (1998) contests the use of the word 'traditional' because it implies that the religious practices of indigenous people are static, rooted in the past, thus only historically relevant. The justification of the teaching of ZTRs is simply that these religions are very much alive in Zambia. These religions form part of the mental cultural heritage of Africans and are thereby a potential source of identity and consciousness.

Gooderham (1983: 59) asked these questions: 'What lies ahead of RE? In what direction is it oriented? What new horizons, if any, are rising into view? These questions are worth asking, of course, only if the answers can be useful to us and if they are open to serious investigations'. In Zambia, RE follows the phenomenological model, the chief aim of which is that pupils should develop an empathetic understanding and appreciation of world religions without necessarily becoming committed to any of them. This is often described as the educational aspect of RE. So RE is not offered to school pupils to convert them to Christianity, Islam, ZTRs or whatever other religion(s). Central to education is the development of numerous kinds of knowledge and understanding. To this end, many scholars of RE argue that the phenomenological type of RE can make a powerful contribution. The major aims of RE are to promote tolerance. Gooderham (1963: 94) says:

Tolerance means believing that, unless it can be shown otherwise, the characteristic beliefs, values and practices of other groups are worth of respect and that members of those groups have a right to be committed to them. By

‘tolerance’, I also mean regularly behaving in ways that are consistent with that belief. The argument is that in the course of providing religious education of the phenomenological type, teachers have an excellent opportunity to foster tolerance in this sense among good pupils.

The biggest flaw of the phenomenological approach is that it does not take account of the connection between religion and false consciousness or the intrinsic ambiguity of religion. In other words, the approach does not permit an understanding of the role of deception in religion (See John Hull’s work at <http://www.johnmhull.biz>).

One may ask: Do ZTRs add value to RE? To answer this question one may want to start by indicating some of the attitudes emphasised in RE, such as a willingness to recognise that beliefs and ideas may be expressed in a variety of ways, and a willingness to value diversity in religion and culture. The trend in RE now is to develop syllabuses that enable pupils to develop four (4) capacities:

- (i) the capacity to gain knowledge and understanding of religions and human experiences, from which fundamental questions of belief and value arise;
- (ii) the capacity to raise questions about belief and value;
- (iii) the capacity to evaluate issues of belief and value; and
- (iv) the capacity to relate knowledge and understanding gained to own outlook and experience.

These practices can be divided broadly into two: exploring (capacity i) and responding (capacity ii, iii and iv).

In our presentation of ZTRs to the learners we have to realise first of all, as Ferne (1986: 69) puts it, ‘one of the real problems in uncovering the native African religions has been the dearth of written accounts and the dependence of oral tradition’. This means that our written sources are anthropological on which theological works are built. After independence, there was a reappraisal of ATRs in RE. The first RE syllabus that paid attention to ATRs was the one launched in 1971. The idea was that ZTRs form much of the experiences of Zambian black indigenous learners and that despite their being Christianised, they still need to be informed about their heritage. Moreover, Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that education aims at ‘respect for the language and values of the child’s own country as well as for those of other cultures.’ ZTRs are part of the mental cultural heritage of indigenous Zambians and are thereby a potential source of identity and consciousness, morality and spirituality.

After the 1977 Educational Reforms ATRs gained prominence in the Secondary School RE syllabus. Why? Ragsdale (1986: 90) says, ‘the aim of teaching ATRs was no longer to discuss them as foreshadowing of the gospel or to create African consciousness. They were to be taught as a dialectical interchange with Christianity and other religions in Zambia such as Hinduism and Islam. Thus pupils are made to study the differences in the system of values, concepts and attitudes of these religions.’ Katulushi (1997: 104) argued by emphasising the point Ragsdale down-played, that the aim of teaching ZTRs was to give pupils a basis of learning about other religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and others.

## **Conclusion**

Zambia has followed closely the RE approaches of Wales and England, but curriculum developers and scholars in the country have not quite adequately dealt with the teaching of ZTRs. British RE is both critical and spiritual in the sense that it seeks to dispel ignorance and superstition, exposing religious beliefs to the light of rational discussion, and is not contented with merely factual description; it seeks to make a lively and intelligible contribution to the moral and spiritual development of every child respectively (see John Hull's work at <http://www.johnmhull.biz>). I have argued that ZTRs should not be presented in the Christian idiom. Rather, learners should be allowed to subject them to rational discussion and to learn from them. Learners should, on their own, make whatever conclusions about their own religions from their readings, lessons and seminars or tutorials without being coerced or prejudiced by some ideological presentation of ZTRs.

## References

- Carmody, B. (1992). *Conversion and Jesuit Schooling in Zambia*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Colson, E. (1962). *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Colson, E. (1971). *The Social Impact of Resettlement*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Colson, E. (2004). 'Leza into God - God into Leza'. in Carmody, B. (ed.) (2004). *Religion and Education in Zambia*. Ndola: Mission Press, pp. 1-7.
- Colson, E. (2006). *Tonga Religious Life in the Twentieth Century*. Lusaka:Bookworld.
- Cox, J.L. (1998). *Rational Ancestors: Scientific Rationality and African Religions*. Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press.
- Der, G.B. (1980). 'God and Sacrifice in the Traditional Religion.' In *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Vol. 11, No. 3. Pp. 172-182.
- Ellis, S. and Ter Haar, G. (2004). *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Garvey, B. (1974). 'The Development of the White Fathers' Mission among the Bemba-speaking Peoples 1891-1964'. Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of London.
- Gooderham, W.D. (1983). 'Dialogue and Emancipation: New Horizons in the Development of Religious Education?' in *British Journal of Religious Education*, 5 (2): 59-66.
- Horton, R. (1971). 'African Conversion'. In *Africa*. 41: 85-108.
- Idowu, E.B. (1973). *African Traditional Religion, A Definition*. London: SCM.
- Katulushi, C. (1997). 'Teaching Traditional African Religions and Gender Issues in Religious Education in Zambia.' In *British Journal of Religious Education*. 21 (2): 101-111.
- Mbiti, J. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Mbiti, J. (1973). *Concepts of God in Africa*. London: SPCK.

- Meyer, B (1964). 'Beyond Syncretism: Translation and Diabolisation in the Appropriation of Protestantism in Africa'. In C. Stewart and R. Shaw (eds). *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Nurnberger, K. (1974). 'The Sotho Notion of the Supreme Being and the Impact of the Christian Proclamation', in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 7. (Fasc. 3): 170-186.
- P'bitek, O. (1970). *African Religions in Western Scholarship*. Kampala: East African Literature Bureau.
- Parrinder, E. G. (1974). *African Traditional Religions* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). London: Sheldon Press.
- Pritchard, E.E. (1956). *Nuer Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ragsdale, J. P. (1986). *Protestant Mission Education in Zambia 1880 -1954*. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press.
- Schleiermacher, F. (1958). *On Religion*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Schreiter, J. R. (1985). *Constructing Local Theologies*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Scudder, T. (1962). *The Ecology of the Gwembe Tonga*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Van Binsbergen, W. M. J. (1981). *Religious Change in Zambia: Exploratory Studies*. London & Boston: Kegan Paul Int.
- Van Rinsum, H. J. (2004). 'Knowing the African: Edwin Smith and the Invention of African Traditional Religion'. in *Slaves of Definition in Quest of the Unbeliever and the Ignoramus*. Maastricht: Shaker Publishing.
- Vansina, J. (1990). *Paths in the Forests*. London: James Currey.
- Zahan, D. (1979). *The Religion, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press