

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION A MORAL SAVER AMIDST CLIMATE CHANGE: AFTERMATH THE MARIANIST PIONEERS AT MABOYS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT

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Abstract

The article focuses on the contribution the Marianist Brothers made to moral and integral boys' education in their education philosophy at Matero Boys Secondary School popularly known as MaBoys. Cox's theory of phenomenology of religion was used to generate empirical data from the religious and lived experiences of the Marianist Brothers as well as the narrated stories from both former teachers and pupils of the first twenty-five years at MaBoys. The study was purely qualitative and specifically used a follow-up case study design to capture and understand the Marianist applied pedagogical practices in enhancing former pupils' lives after leaving the school. The findings indicated that Religious Education was the core of morality in the face of climate change. This can be seen as evidence that the Marianist imprint remained in the boys' lives long after school. The study recommends for a further study to be done after the pioneers have relocated to their land of origin to sensor the current moral values.

Keywords: *Morals, Religious Education, Climate Change, Marianist Education.*

1.0 BACKGROUND

Carmody (2021) observed that in the years following its Independence in 1964, Zambia, like many African states, viewed education to be pivotal to its development as a nation. This belief in the power of school was partly grounded in what is known as the modernisation approach which emphasised investment in the formation of the labour capital. The political leaders were concerned with economic progress and the need to build an inclusive nation (Carmody, 2021). However, the new Zambian government under the leadership of Kenneth Kaunda was challenged due to its different ethnic groups as Mwanakatwe (2013) observed from his teaching experience that the new government realised the need of its diverse people to be educated. It was also argued by Colson (1999) and Larmer (2014) that the need of the new government was greatly a concern to ensure that unity prevailed among diverse ethnic groups in the new state. Thus, education was seen to be an important part of this need so that one of the new government's first actions was to assume large-scale control of it (Carmody, 2015). It is

from this point of view that after Vatican II (1962-65), which largely coincided with Zambian Independence in 1964, the Catholic Church adopted a more open approach by cooperating with the state and other Christian and non-Christian groups. This harmonised with the new Zambian state's approach which emphasised a non-denominational approach to schooling (Carmody, 2016).

Most importantly, the newly independent nation was largely concerned with providing skilled labour for national development. According to Carmody (2016: 6), "by highlighting development through modernization, the Zambian Ministry of Education (MoE) did not exclude religion. Rather, it called for the kind of religion that would unite its emerging national community." For Catholic education, this concern of government with a somewhat Universalist approach to religion in schooling led to an increasing separation between the church's specific religious ethos and learning (Carmody, 2016).

1.1 Marianist Brothers in Zambia

Coincidentally, in the 1960s after Pope John Paul the VI in Rome put out a call to all religious societies in the Roman Catholic Church to come to the assistance of the Church in Africa especially in the area of education (Albano, 1994). It was at that meeting where the New York Province was considered to open a school in Zambia. In 1964, the Society of Mary in the United States took up the challenge to build a secondary school in Matero Township. However, the Marianist education's charism was to teach and transform the learners' lives through intensifying Religious Education. Hence, this necessitated the study at hand to provide empirical evidence and lessen dependence on theoretical constructions outside the Zambian context. The study sought to examine how the Marianist Brothers' pedagogical practices enhanced pupils' lives after leaving the school.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Aspects of Morality Integrated with Education

According to Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2006), morality is an accepted code of human conduct in a society. Being moral or being morally conscious means adopting standards or principles to guide one's actions and conduct in society. The duo further asserts that good morals are inculcated in learners through different institutions, be it traditional, modern, or mission organizations. Morality, therefore, is emphasized by [expert] teachers in different fields to children and others determined by the institution. In this study, the researcher sought to find out how moral values were integrated into education provided by the Marianist Brothers in their endeavor to educate the boys at MaBoys.

Any form of education that aims at changing the learner's behaviour reflects both morals and values that are practiced in the learner's society. Regarding moral values, Uyanga (2014) asserts that these are essential values that determine individuals' perception of morality and moral consciousness in society. Uyanga (2014) further pointed out that moral values included truthfulness, patience, obedience, honesty, integrity, hard work, responsibility, respect, tolerance, loyalty, public spiritedness, freedom, respect for human life and dignity of persons, justice, fairness and equality. Similarly, Kinnier et al (2000) collectively considered virtues such as compassion, justice, truth, and forgiveness as moral values. Ariyanti (2016) describes moral values simply as values that always represent human daily lives whether at home, school, work,

or anywhere. Ariyanti (2016) further states that moral values are one basis on which people make decisions, either right or wrong.

2.2 Education

According to Adeyemi and Adeyinka (1993: 37) morality, morals and values are self-pollinated through education which they describe in general as, “the process of cultural transmission and renewal, the process whereby the adult members of a society carefully guide the development of infants and young children initiating them into the culture of the society.” Education has been defined differently by various scholars all directing to the Latin words *educare* and *educere*, meaning to bring up, to rear, to direct, to guide, to educate (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 1993). In short, education is a process of bringing up children by adult members of the family and society (Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 1993).

According to Srivastava (2017), the term education is a process of developing one’s personality and not just gaining a certificate and skills. Furthermore, education is, a process by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, and intellect is experienced, and a student learns to stand on one’s feet. Therefore, education should be capable of stabilising social order, conserving culture in society, and acting as an instrument of social reconstruction. Education should not only preserve the social heritage but also be able to enrich it, this therefore, entails that, education being a multipurpose process, not only inculcates social economic and cultural awareness in humanity but is also an important medium for grasping and promoting life-enhancing values among human beings (Srivastava, 2017). This article reports the findings on how the Marianist Brothers integrated moral values with education helping the boys to be responsible graduates and participate in national development.

2.3 Religion and Morality

Simuchimba (2005) asserted that there is something imperative about morals that men and women must discover and to which they ought to conform. However, for religious-minded people, something imperative is God, Allah, Brahman, and so on. The imperative thing (God, Allah and so on) is the source of moral law. Scholarly, it has been observed that religion and morality go together. To teach a person religion includes giving him or her moral training. Simuchimba’s (2005) conclusion indicated that Religious Education and Moral Education are inspirable. In this light, it is rational that Moral Education is teaching young people what elders have decided as good behaviour. It also means that young learners are trained to obey by adhering to certain habits.

Mwewa (1977) argued in the same way as Simuchimba (2005) on the importance of moral education. According to Mwewa (1977), moral education is one of the fundamental aspects of human life and society. It consists of some basic principles like honesty, truthfulness, kindness, sympathy, and many others. Mwewa further asserted that moral education referred to the teaching of children to acquire those virtues and moral values that would help them individually to live a good life and be productive members of the community. Mwewa also emphasised that learning through religious and moral education enabled children and young people to attain discernment, and critical thinking and to act decisively when making moral decisions. This might lead students to make a positive difference in the world by putting their beliefs and values into action (Mwewa, 197; Simuchimba, 2005).

Most importantly, Mwewa (1977) argued that Zambian traditional culture could only be understood and embraced through Christian values. He inter-twinned the Zambian values with Christianity without allowing Zambian traditional values to supersede the Christian values. The integration of Zambian and Christian values might play a vital role in society, by shaping people's habitual moral behaviour.

Moreover, it is arguable that morality differs from custom or tradition. That is tradition is a belief while custom is the way of doing something that has existed for a long time among a particular group of people. A set of these beliefs or customs are those of religious or cultural aspects. In the same line of thought, customs and traditions have standards, but these are more cooperative than personal. Customs are more aligned with the visible execution of socially accepted norms rather than on the internal motives and personalities of concerned individuals. Moreover, the accepted patterns of conduct which have been handed down from generation to generation are regarded as embodying the well-being of the group.

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The research was purely qualitative and used a follow-up case study design to look at the first twenty-five years of the Marianist Brothers' provision of education at MaBoys. Further, the follow-up case study was appropriate because the researcher traced the respondents who were at MaBoys during the period under scrutiny. The study used purposive (typical) sampling which was appropriate study because it only targeted those respondents who were expected to have adequate knowledge about the Marianist Brothers' contribution to moral and integral boys' education. The sample consisted of 35 respondents out of which 3 were school administrators; 5 Marianist Brothers; 5 former teachers; 2 Catholic Education sectaries and 20 former pupils who were sampled through the initial seed of Old MaBoys Alumni Committee (OMBAC) and Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) was used to identify the former boy. Both primary and secondary data were collected through Semi-Structured Interviews. One-to-one interviews, Focus Group Discussions and document reviews were used as methods for data collection. Multiple methods of data collection validated the research. (Patton, 2020). Additionally, data was analysed thematically.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Marianists Charism

The findings established that the Marianist Charism was the core of their education. All the interviewed Marianist Brothers admitted that Marianist education aimed at sowing and cultivating the Christian spirit in humans. When asked how morality was integrated into their education, all the respondents generally indicated that education for them consisted of forming Christ in souls. This was the mission of the society and it was Mary's mission. It was similar to that of Christ himself. Fr. Jansen further explained that Fr. Chaminade understood Christian education based on the Marianist Brothers' charism. He said as they teach the boys, their character and moral behaviour remain as an imprint in their learners' lives without drawing any separate lessons, boys learn good morals from what they see in Brothers' lives. Further, Br. Eric said Marianist Brothers provides a holistic type of education. By the time the boys leave the school they are fully grown up and acquire good morals.

To get more information on why the Marianist religious order spread their mission through education, the following follow-up question was asked: Why did the Marianist religious order establish schools? In an in-depth interview all the Brothers indicated that they were guided by Fr. Chaminade's principles in their endeavour to educate young souls. Further, Fr. Jansen explained that Fr. Chaminade spoke of Christian education as co-existence with their universal Marianist apostolate such as, *Do whatever he tells you*, just like what Mary said to the people around Jesus during the wedding ceremony at Cana. The Marianist Brothers through faith provided Christian education wherever they were sent and in whatever they were doing. Br. Jill (*pseudonym*) had the following to say:

For us, imparting morals in our learners is just one thing. We are apostles to carry Fr. Chaminade's vision and spread it to other parts of the world through the provision of educational services.

The findings of the study showed that the Marianist Brothers' education was the core of moral and integral education at MaBoys. The Marianist Brothers dedicated themselves to teaching to form Christ in the souls of young people. Br. Carmine revealed that their call for education was to form souls in young people through education, hence, morality was part of this education. For the Marianist Brothers at MaBoys, the provision of education to the youthful boys was a calling from God and their founder Chaminade. The presence of the Marianists in the institution gave them a gist to pass on good morals to their learners. This agrees with what Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2006) who observed that in indigenous education morality was emphasized by expert teachers. Similarly, be it mission or modern institutional organisations, moral teaching is determined by its experts and learners appreciate the services.

Additionally, data gathered from both in-depth interviews and FGDs generally showed that at MaBoys the Marianist Brothers and the teaching staff were not just experts in academic subjects but were role models to their learners. Similarly, Kerley (2005) noted that morality could be a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion or culture, or it could derive from a standard that a person believed should be universal. Cox's (1994) phenomenology of religion also showed that the inner core of religion is adoration. This referred to a universal essence that was expressed through the cultural values of one generation and then handed down to the following generation, which in turn reformulates into more sophisticated levels of understanding. In the case of MaBoys, the boys who joined the school might already have been oriented to traditional teachings that instituted good morals in them. As a result, the education they acquired from the Marianist Brothers shaped their lives to be better citizens and contributed to the development of the nation.

4.2 The Marianist School Environment

The Marianist school environment in this context, referred to the school set up where learning and other related activities took place. The school atmosphere provided features that helped teachers to control the learners during school hours. When asked the following follow-up question: How the school environment was a cornerstone of teaching morality, all the respondents interviewed, generally agreed that the school environment was the source of moral behaviour for both teachers and pupils. The Headteacher reported that MaBoys' environment itself helps to reform unwanted behaviour among the learners and teachers.

Br. Kenny (pseudonym) also indicated that the features of the school were what helped the Marianists to inculcate morals in their learners. He added that to reinforce morality, the school had a chaplain who most of the time interacted with the learners through academic and non-academic activities to guide the learners to be responsible citizens even after they left MaBoys. Br. Carmine further referred to the Marianist education philosophy as the source of moral inculcation because it offered integral education to form holistically well-rounded persons. Further, Br Given explained that in their education philosophy, the Marianist school environment is viewed to be a way of inculcating morals in learners. For them to keep the boys not to losing hope and focus, they provide a suitable learning environment. they provide a climate of acceptance, discipline, and love. The school acts as a 'second family' fostering human growth and maturity.

So MaBoys had certain features that made it to be a unique school from other schools in Matero, Lusaka, Zambia and beyond. Besides the common regulations that the school provided, the Marianist Brothers interacted beyond their expected roles as teachers by exercising parental care to bring up well-mannered citizens in a Zambian cultural context. This agrees with Mwewa (1977) who asserted that Zambian traditional culture could only be understood and embraced through Christian values. Additionally, to be more precise in his explanation, Mwewa (1977) inter-twinned the Zambian values with Christianity without allowing the Zambian traditional values to supersede the Christian values. This could be the reason why morality was upheld at MaBoys.

The Marianist education philosophy was important as it acted as the source of inculcation of morals in boys at MaBoys. This was evidenced by one former teacher's remarks that at MaBoys education aimed at forming well-rounded persons who would be responsible citizens. In addition, the findings from Br. Ray showed that to keep the boys focused and not to lose hope in life, at MaBoys, Marianist education provided a suitable learning environment that helped in shaping the boys' behaviour. According to Shrivastava (2017), institutions of learning emphasize moral value education which provides real meaning in life and enhances the well-being of the individual. He further asserted that moral values are guiding principles of life and are responsible for the all-round development of an individual. Thus, by emphasising moral values development, the Marianist Brothers contributed to the all-round development of their learners, evidence was seen in what the boys were doing after leaving the school. All former boys who took part in this study, were in formal employment or entrepreneur business to earn a living.

The study established that the school environment helped the learners to practice the value of service even after leaving the school. The findings gathered from the interviews with the teachers showed that the routine way of doing things at MaBoys engaged the learners in different duties. This was because Marianists as providers of education, had a well-designated programme and each pupil who reported for the first time underwent an orientation mentorship to get accustomed to the new environment. This helped the newcomers to have someone to talk to, trust, and feel welcomed and cared for. The value of serving others was practiced by learners including the staff as they were obliged to live according to the school mission statement.

Further, the study discovered that Marianist education was based on love, to teach the local boys of Matero compound, coming from different cultural backgrounds, moral and religious values. This was an indication that the Marianist education taught the value

of love for others and God. At MaBoys, this spirit was witnessed in the acts of the former pupils who kept on visiting their former school for purposes of finding ways they could help the school in addition to the help they gave to the community in general. This agrees with the theory underpinning this study, Cox's (1964) emphasis on religious experience of God. At MaBoys, the former pupils felt the creature feeling and showed love for others. Hence, they wanted to do more for their school in their lived experiences. For example, as Secretary General for all former MaBoys who were still in touch with each other and the school, the SG for OMABAC expressed love for others and had a passion helping others and his former school. He sacrificed his time to organise and attend each event of the year that involved former pupils, for instance, the Old Boys Picnic and other fundraising ventures. This gesture of love for others is what the ACES meant when she responded in the interview the researcher held with her, that the former pupils of MaBoys were known for their service of others and notable practices were seen in the school's annual gatherings. They rendered service to the needy. For instance, they showed love and helped underprivileged pupils complete their education. This kind of leadership portrayed by former boys through organising beneficial events at MaBoys, was an indicator of climate change in the education provided by the Marianist Brothers and the Catholic Church at large. Former pupils emulated the charity characteristics of the Marianist Brothers from their lived experiences.

D'Souza (2018) observed that Catholic schools in Pakistan sought to transform society by an educational programme that promoted care for others, for the cosmos, and for one's relationship with God. Students groomed from such schools were expected to be intellectually and socially developed, having gained knowledge of facts and skills to serve others and the nation at large. Students were also expected to have the ability to dialogue and to think critically on issues about the well-being of others. Similarly, the boys at MaBoys received an education that was productive and enhanced the leadership skills needed to serve people in their communities and the nation at large. The shift in thinking showed by former pupils long after school, was an indicator of climate change. After undergoing Marianist education, all respondents who took part in this study, were in high-ranking jobs and others were running self-sustained businesses.

4.3 Wednesday Religious Programme

All five (5) Marianist Brothers who were interviewed indicated that there were two key areas of instruction and education in a Marianist High School setting. To justify the two key areas Br. Zack (not real name) indicated that to produce morally upright students in Marianist schools, the Brothers emphasise more on instruction in the Christian way of life and education in the Christian environment through the building of a Christian community to nourish the boys' lives. This is in line with the theory of phenomenology of religion, evidence is visible in the lived experiences of the people involved directly in Marianist Education.

The researcher probed further to find out how these two areas in their education were achieved. Br. Stanley explained, that at MaBoys RE is not a passing subject like any other O level but as a subject helping to transform learners in their daily learning as Cox (1994) observed the unlimited power of God which gives freedom of choices.

The current Head teacher also explained the importance of teaching RE as a compulsory subject to boys because it is practical. Various faith groups shares Biblical knowledge. At MaBoys the Wednesday Religious Programme was integrated in the

teaching and learning activities to allow each person to find a place with God. There is sacred to both pupils and staff to share, pray and worship God according to each of their religious beliefs. This climate change in the sphere of Zambian education, was the entire purpose to help the learners develop their faith along-side other skills they acquired and became more responsible in life.

The fourth aspect that had been integrated with education by Marianist Brothers of MaBoys was the Wednesday programme. The Marianist Brothers introduced a religious programme which ran side by side with the curriculum-based subjects. Every Wednesday students gathered from eleven to thirteen hours in different groups according to their faiths. This was one way to enhance spiritual life in their students while at MaBoys. This was evidenced in some former pupils' sentiments during FGD that the spiritual life they experienced during their school days helped them to be morally upright in their spiritual and social life long after school. Furthermore, the SG for OMABAC added that his marriage had been stable and he was a faithful spouse and trusted by his wife, children and other members of the family. Findings from Br. Given expressed how the Wednesday Religious Programme was integrated into the teaching and learning activities at MaBoys. The Brothers and teachers put together a religious structure to allow each person to have a relationship with God. This was arranged through the school's Wednesday timetable. There was sacred time allowed from eleven to thirteen hours in which pupils and staff members shared, prayed and worshipped God according to their religious faiths."

Similarly, findings gathered from the former chaplain, showed that the religious classes gave learners a sense of the presence of God and a direction for their lives. The Marianist Brothers taught religious activities to widen the scope of learners to grasp and understand the concepts of the teachings of Christ and be able to follow the Ten Commandments which guided them in their lives. According to Cox's theory of phenomenology of religion, learners who were exposed to various religious activities developed empathy towards believers of their religions. In light of Cox's (1998) theory of phenomenology of religion, Kristensen (1960: 11) postulated that the use of empathy deepened the personal faith of the learners since it involved more than play-acting. Unless one had personal and religious experience, it might be impossible to apply empathy to other people. In other words, when religion is the subject of the learner's work, he/she grows religiously. The former pupils at MaBoys came from different religious backgrounds but they met together in the religious programmes and shared their beliefs and values leading to strengthening their faith.

Without a doubt, reinforcing RE with the Wednesday Religious Programme helped the learners to learn about the core values in religion and use them in their lives. This is in line with Grimmitt (1987) who asserted that in learning about religion, pupils learn about the discernment and interpretation of core values, the shaping influence of religious beliefs and values on culture and personal histories and other aspects of life. Additionally, learners might also learn about the need for them to take responsibility for their own decisions, especially in matters of personal beliefs and conduct (Grimmitt, 1987). Above all, what the boys learned during the religious programme helped them to face the world out there and counter the vices found in it. After graduating, the boys joined different government and parastatal organisations where they might have encountered different vices such as corruption, tribalism, bribery, and other unjust acts. The strong foundation laid upon them through the religious programme and other

activities might have helped the former pupils of MaBoys to resist those vices and continue working as upright individuals. They might not be as upright as expected but as former MaBoys, they might have found it difficult to lose the values and faith they had acquired. This is in light of what the Headteacher observed regarding the importance of teaching RE as a compulsory subject at MaBoys. By making RE compulsory and including it in the religious programme, the subject was made practical. It was not like teaching other subjects such as Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics as RE prepared the learners to acquire moral values that would help them attain faith they would live with this throughout their lives.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Catholic Marianist religious order introduced Christian moral values in the Zambia education which were taught alongside the academic subjects. In their provision of moral education to local boys of Matero and other surrounding areas, the Marianist Brothers embedded moral values in the education system to strengthen the traditional values which prevailed in the Matero community. The boys benefited and assimilated the Catholic moral values despite coming from different religious faiths. The presence of the Marianist Brothers at MaBoys, restored the behavioral change in boys who came from different social background. In their education, the Marianist Brothers' simplicity and humility in serving others were dedicated to everyday duties which the boys observed and assimilated.

Prior to cultural values embraced in Zambian education, the Marianist Brothers' education embedded moral values in the education system of Zambia which appreciated the learners' spiritual and social development. The MaBoys environment worked as checks and balances of moral behaviour, boys emulated the characteristics portrayed by their educators. The Marianist Brothers and the teaching staff lived an exemplary life in providing moral and integral boys' education to boys who came from different religious and cultural backgrounds, and helped pupils to be responsible citizens.

5.2 Recommendation

In view of the results of the study and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendation was made:

This study recommends that RE should be made compulsory as a subject for all learners to have a holistic education system to promote moral values in all graduates.

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