

# The Missionary Objective of Conversion, the Missiological Outcome thereof, and the Academic Aim of Religion Studies: Finding a Place for all of These in the Training of Teachers and Missionaries

*Prof. S.J.P.K. Riekert*

## Samevatting

*Sendingwerk word soms geag nie tuis te hoort binne 'n konstitusionele leefwyse, waar godsdiensvryheid gewaarborg word nie. In hierdie opsig word die propagering van bekering as 'n voorvereiste om 'n Christen te kan word, gesien as in botsing te wees met die idee van godsdiensvryheid. 'n Nadere ondersoek van die konstitusie van Suid-Afrika en die Nasionale beleidsdokument oor godsdiens en onderwys bevestig die outeur se oortuiging dat niks die Christelike belydenis verhinder nie, bekering die enigste manier is waarop 'n persoon 'n Christen kan word en dat niks die propagering daarvan in die weg staan nie. Daar is, nogtans, beperkinge op die wyse waarop dit gepropageer en toegepas mag word.*

## 1. Introduction

Carlos Caldas (2008) claimed in his paper that there is prejudice against Missiology in that it is seen as an inferior field of theological studies. In South African academic circles the claim is often made that Missiology is the theological discipline that clashes *per se* with the human rights that are set out in the South African constitution. So if theological studies have to lose something, it should be Missiology. This idea the author has experienced in Christian circles. In non-christian circles there is often no objection against missiology as such, but rather against a conviction that citizens living in a country with freedom of religious conviction should be subjected to efforts to convert them.

This article would like to determine what the implications of religious freedom are according to the South African Constitution. The researcher has three primary sources, viz. the South African Constitution, the National Policy Document on Religion and Education and the comments of Prof. Krüger on the Policy Document. He was one of the main contributors to the formulation of the document during the final stages of its preparation.

## **2. Religious rights in terms of the Constitution of South Africa**

The preamble of the constitution accords the constitution, as the supreme law of the Republic, the function to “establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights”.

The founding provisions state that the South African state is founded on the following values (only those which the author deems significant for our theme).

### Chapter 1 - Founding Provisions

- 1) The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:
  - a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.

In the founding provisions there is a subsection 6, point 5(b)(ii) on language which asks a Pan South African Language Board to promote and ensure respect for “Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit and other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa”.

What is important in this regard is that minorities or small religious communities are protected in terms of particular features of their religious practices or doctrines. If the church can only grow by people being converted and joining the community (cf. Abraham van de Beek, 2008) or via an appeal to church members to become converted, conversion could be seen as peculiar to the Christian community and could not be outlawed on the strength of a presumed clash with the constitution. Straehler’s (2008) definition that conversion is a radical turning around to Jesus as Saviour and Lord does not detract from this peculiarity.

The Chapter on the bill of rights, paragraph 9.3 states:

The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

Please note that religion, conscience and belief are grouped together so that the state/ no one should find any ground in religion or religious belief to discriminate unfairly.

On the other hand, paragraph 15, subsections 1-2 express the freedom of religion, belief and opinion positively as follows.

15. Freedom of religion, belief and opinion

- 1) Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.
- 2) Religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that:
  - a) those observances follow rules made by the appropriate public authorities;
  - b) they are conducted on an equitable basis; and
  - c) attendance at them is free and voluntary.

Taken together the author here finds freedom to practise one's religion in public provided that it takes place according to general rules, on an equitable basis and is without coercion.

Paragraph 16 of the Bill of Rights deals with the freedom of expression. The first subparagraph reads as follows:

16. Freedom of expression

- 1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes
  - a) freedom of the press and other media;
  - b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;
  - c) freedom of artistic creativity; and
  - d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

It is supplemented by subparagraph (2) which places limitations on the right of freedom of expression. It reads as follows:

- 2) The right in subsection (1) does not extend to
  - a) propaganda for war;
  - b) incitement of imminent violence; or
  - c) advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion, and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.

We may highlight the prohibition of the advocacy of hatred based on religion. Paragraph 31, sub-paragraph (1) on cultural, religious and linguistic communities clearly states the rights of religious communities to practise their religion, as follows:

31. Cultural, religious and linguistic communities
  - 1) Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community:
    - a) to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language; and
    - b) to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

Please note that it has also a sub-paragraph (2) which formulates that the rights may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.

- 2) The rights in subsection (1) may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.

### **3. The constitution and the policy document on Religion and Education in terms of religious rights**

Although the policy document is directed at primary and secondary education, it formulates the human rights in relation to religious and religion issues.

#### Introduction to the Policy on Religion and Education nurture

1. In this document we set out the policy on the relationship between religion and education that we believe will best serve the interests of our democratic society. The objective is to influence and shape this relationship, in a manner that is in accordance with the values of our South African Constitution. In recognising the particular value of the rich and diverse religious heritage of our country, we identify the distinctive contribution that religion can make to education, and that education can make to teaching and learning about religion, and we therefore promote the role of religion in education. In doing so we work from the premise that the public school has an educational responsibility for teaching and learning about religion and religions, and for promoting these, but that it should do so in ways that are different from the religious instruction and religious provided by the home, family, and religious community.

#### **3.1 Religion and society**

Krüger (2003), in his explanation of the theoretical points of departure of the policy document, clearly shows that religion in Life Orientation is limited to one outcome.

### **New Policy on Religion in Education:**

As will become clear below, it is not for nothing that this outcome is concerned with the social, civic co-existence in the country. This particular outcome (outcome 2) reads as follows:

#### **Learning Outcome 2: Social Development**

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.

He comments as follows:

Not only all learners in all schools, but also all prospective teachers will have the privilege of studying religion in this open, non-threatening manner.

### **3.2 A secular state**

The South African Constitution is interpreted by many to give preference to a secular state. This is affirmed by the National Policy on Religion and Education, as reflected in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5.

3. In a co-operative model, both the principle of legal separation and the possibility of creative interaction are affirmed. Separate spheres for religion and the state are established by the Constitution, but there is scope for interaction between the two. While ensuring the protection of citizens from religious discrimination or coercion, this model encourages an ongoing dialogue between religious groups and the state in areas of common interest and concern. Even in such exchanges, however, religious individuals and groups must be assured of their freedom from any state interference with regard to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion.
4. In regard to the relationship between religion and public education, we propose that the cooperative model which combines constitutional separation and mutual recognition, provides a framework that is best for religion and best for education in a democratic South Africa.
5. Under the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, the state, neither advancing nor inhibiting religion, must assume a position of fairness, informed by a parity of esteem for all religions, and worldviews. This positive impartiality carries a profound appreciation of spirituality and religion in its many manifestations, as reflected by the deference to God in the preamble to our Constitution, but does not impose these.

According to Krüger one of the pillars of the policy is that it makes a clear distinction and effects a clear separation between the roles of the state and public school on the one hand, and (organised) religion and parental home on the other. Yet, it also places a high premium on co-operation between these different spheres of life. It clearly sought to develop a third, creative way beyond mutual hostility and even indifference on the one hand, and, on the other, collapsing any of these spheres into another or even making any subservient to any other one (articles 3, 4 and 5).

The state and public schools are not seen as religious bodies or religious agents. Religion is studied in public schools insofar as it is part of the civic, educational fields of discourse. The role of the state is to act as a publicly impartial facilitator, ... Religion Education (in discussions often referred to as ‘RE’) therefore does not serve any specific religious discourse (articles 22. 23. 70). In the words of the policy: ‘Our schools are not in the business of privileging, prescribing, or promoting any religion.’ (art 70). This stance of the state is expressed as ‘positive impartiality’ (art 5) as far as specific religions are concerned. No religion is favoured above any other religion(s). The policy presents itself as concerned with procedural *justice*, with equal access for all to all privileges and rights guaranteed in the Constitution. Art 28 states: ‘The policy is about the equality of all religions before the law; whether all religions are equal and true in a religious or philosophical sense falls outside of the scope of this policy’ – it is not seen as part of the brief of the state or a public school.

The author would like to add “or a university as such”. However, there is a common interest for the study of missiology between the state (the guardian and guarantee of Higher Education) and a religious group seeking quality education for its/their ministers.

In this regard Krüger claims:

Yet the policy also explicitly adopts a position of religion-friendliness (art 66), using terms such as ‘profound appreciation’ for religion and spirituality, and ‘promoting’ it (e.g. articles 1. 2. 5. 8. and 19). Such a stance, over against the flat one-dimensionality of vulgar materialism, must be appreciated.

### **3.3 Pluralistic society without promoting syncretism**

The National Policy Document on Religion and Education, in its section, the “Background to the policy on Religion and Education”, lays the foundation for acceptance of a pluralistic society by its guiding principles.

8. To achieve these goals, the relationship between religion and education must be guided by the following principles:
  - In all aspects of the relationship between religion and education, the practice must flow directly from the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion.
  - Public institutions have a responsibility to teach about religion and religions in ways that reflect a profound appreciation of the spiritual, non-material aspects of life, but which are different from the religious education, religious instruction, or religious nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community.
  - Religion Education should contribute to creating an integrated and informed Religion and Education Policy ... that affirms unity in diversity.
  - Teaching about religion, religions, and religious diversity needs to be facilitated by trained professionals, and programmes in Religion Education must be supported by appropriate and credible teaching and learning materials, and objective assessment criteria.

This is further elaborated onto in the section on “Values”.

11. This policy for the role of religion in education flows directly from the Constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom for conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion. By enshrining these basic values, the Constitution provides the framework for determining the relationship between religion and education in a democratic society.
12. Our Constitution has worked out a careful balance between freedom of religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and discrimination. On the one hand, by ensuring that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience,<sup>1</sup> religion, thought, belief and opinion, the Constitution<sup>1</sup> guarantees freedom of and for religion, and citizens are free to exercise their basic right to religious conviction, expression, and association. On the other hand, by ensuring equality in the

---

1 Sections 15(1) and (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

enjoyment of all the rights, privileges, and benefits of citizenship, the Constitution explicitly prohibits unfair discrimination on grounds that include religion, belief and conscience. Protected from any discriminatory practices based on religion, citizens are thereby also free from any religious coercion that might be implied by the state.

13. The South African Schools Act (Act 94 of 1996) upholds the constitutional rights of all citizens to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion, and freedom from unfair discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including religion, in public education institutions.
14. Within this constitutional framework, public schools have a calling to promote the core values of a democratic society, through the curriculum, through extra-curricular activities, and in the way that they approach religious festivals, school uniforms and even diets. As identified in the report of the ministerial committee on values in education, these core values include equity, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability, and social honour.

Krüger comments as follows:

By ‘pluralism’ is usually understood the positive acceptance of religious plurality (‘plurality’: containing, or consisting of a large number). That is something quite different from the non-acceptance, or the merely reluctant toleration of such plurality. As far as the public school system is concerned, pluralism would mean that the fact of a variety of religions in the country is positively accepted as part of the public profile of the country. It is a fact of civic life, interpreted positively. The policy steers a middle course between centralism, on the one hand, and mere fragmentation on the other. The word ‘pluralism’, intending domination-free coherence, captures that intent.

As said above, pluralism is something quite different from making any religious pronouncements on the religious value of various religions.

The policy proceeds from the premise that every learner should be equally welcome and at home in every public school and all its activities, regardless of his/ her personal religion or lack thereof, and that none should be discriminated against unfairly. Another way of putting this, is that it should not be necessary for any individual learner to excuse her-/himself, or be excused, from any event in the formal school day, or ever to invoke the conscience clause.

It is clear that the policy tries to protect the religious rights of both religious majorities and minorities and it follows the practices already mentioned with regard to the constitution. We can claim that the policy document in respect to the religious aspects in Life Orientation wants to teach and orientate the learners to a plurality of religions, but especially to an appreciation of their own religion as part of a world of religions. Krüger summarises the outcomes as follows:

- a sound knowledge ‘about’ religions, that is, of the ‘facts’ (the historical and social manifestations) of religions;
- increasing self-awareness – or, in the words of the policy-growth ‘in their (i.e. the learners’) inner spiritual and moral dimensions’ (art 19), ‘a deeper sense of self-realisation’ (art 25), and an increased ‘understanding of themselves’ (art 26);
- an understanding of the ‘other’ – or, in other words – ‘a broader civil acceptance of others’ and ‘empathetic appreciation’ (art 25), and a deepened ‘capacity for-empathy’ (art 26);
- ‘a disciplined imagination’ (art 26), ‘critical abilities for *thinking* about religion and *religions*’ and the development of ‘powers of critical reflection in thinking through problems of religious or moral concern’ (art 21) and
- emphasis on morality and values, such as ‘respect for diversity, reduced prejudice. and increased civil toleration’ (art 21; also art 7, 1114).

Although there are always mutual influences traceable from one religion to others in the historical process, the term *syncretism* in the sense of an idea and programme to establish a new religion with elements coming from all the different religions, does not fit the intention of the policy document.

Krüger counters such statements as follows:

Claims sometimes made that the policy was inspired by, or is the result of a conspiracy of an ‘interfaith movement’ or ‘New Age’ are devoid of all substance. Fact is, it delineates an application of a straightforward, well established academic programme. As such it is not closer to any religion than to any other one, and is compatible with the vast mainstreams in all major religions. Religious Studies at tertiary level is taken by students from all religions, as well as by students not belonging to any religion. No confessions of faith are required from either lecturers or students. It is all about intellectual, academic integrity in public institutions open to all. The same will

apply in schools. The academic study of a plurality of religions, in as far as they appear in the civic realm, has absolutely nothing to do with a 'syncretistic' programme inspired by the ideal of a mingling of religions.

In this sense the policy incorporates what has become a common assumption in all religions, namely that there is much space in which religions can work together in the civic sphere for the common good of society. Today, informed people of goodwill would balk at the idea that being true to one's own religion can only flourish in isolation, in contexts of deliberately induced ignorance, indifference or hostility as far as other religions in the public domain are concerned. Our society simply cannot afford to fall back behind that important gain in the civic sphere. The policy proceeds from the assumption that it is possible, and that it is time, for various religions to make their various contributions to the same civic body, beset as it is by serious difficulties in the moral sphere.

#### **4. Religious rights and the formulation of outcomes in curriculum development**

According to Krüger, the policy document

proceeds from the assumption that the state, and public schools (not being mere extensions of a religious body and/or parental home) have a sovereignty and dignity of their own, and also have a certain right, and a duty, to expect, and to promote, a certain level of shared civic values (art. 14). The public school may be expected to play a certain role in this regard. Even independent (i.e. 'private') schools and public schools on private property with a recognised religious character are required to achieve the minimum outcomes for Religion Education (art. 16), that is, to convey the knowledge, values, attitudes and social skills that may be expected of citizens hoping to share the same country in a peaceful manner, free of domination. This does not imply that the state intends 'using' religion for its own ideological purposes. Rather, it creates space for both religion and public educational institutions, encouraging the mutual support of religious and civic spheres, with built-in checks against absolutism on *either* side.

##### ***4.1 Religion Studies and Religion Education***

All the learners in South African schools will encounter the religion diversity and even religious diversity of the South African population through Religion Education, and some of them through Religion Studies.

The policy document gives guidance to the curricular development of the two subjects as follows in pars. 17-22, and again in pars. 28 and 35.

17. Religion Education is a curricular programme<sup>2</sup> with clear and age-appropriate educational aims and objectives, for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world. The study of religion must serve recognisable educational goals that are consistent with the aims and outcomes of other learning areas, and like other learning areas in the curriculum, programmes in Religion Education must contribute to developing basic skills in observation, listening, reading, writing, and thinking.
18. Religion Education may also be justified by the educational character of the programme, which includes the common values that all religions promote, such as the human search for meaning and the ethic of service to others, and by the desirable social ends, such as expanding understanding, increasing tolerance, and reducing prejudice. Religion Education is justified by its contribution to the promotion of social justice, and respect for the environment, that can be served by this field of study within the school curriculum.
21. When we provide our pupils with educationally sound programmes, they will gain a deeper and broader understanding of the life orientations, worldviews, cultural practices, and ethical resources of humanity. As they develop creative and critical abilities for thinking about religion and religions, pupils will also develop the capacities for mutual recognition, respect for diversity, reduced prejudice, and increased civil toleration that are necessary for citizens to live together in a democratic society. Learning about themselves while learning about others, pupils will surely discover their common humanity in diversity, and be both affirmed and challenged to grow in their personal orientation to life.
22. Confessional or sectarian forms of religious instruction in public schools are inappropriate for a religiously diverse and democratic society. As institutions with a mandate to serve the entire society, public schools must avoid adopting a particular religion, or a limited set of religions, that advances sectarian or particular interests. Schools should be explaining what religions are about,

---

2 National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools), 2002.

with clear educational goals and objectives, in ways that increase understanding, build respect for diversity, value spirituality, and clarify the religious and non-religious sources of moral values. We owe this to our pupils, as well as to parents, citizens, and taxpayers.

Krüger explains the mutual interactive role of the state, religious community and the nation/ people in regard to Religion Education, in the following way.

All in all, as far as Religion Education is concerned, the stance of the state conforms most to the general type 'liberal' state – however, not in the sense of the absolute right of the individual, but in the sense of a space-creating, enabling institution, not religious itself, carried by a respect for the rights of the individual, respect for the plurality of religious communities, and respect for the legitimate interests of society as a whole (or 'nation'). The policy does not give absolute priority to either the individual, the religious community, or the largest entity (nation). Rather, it moves in the dynamic mutual interaction between, and a mutual definition of, all three points of reference, without identifying or confusing them or reducing anyone to any of the other two. In a triangulation exercise, it envisions the mutual inherence of parts and parts, and parts and whole. So, to the questions 'does the religiously non-conformist individual learner have the right not to be coerced into what happens to be the majority view in a given school, and not to be made to feel an outsider?'; 'do the various religious groupings, including specifically the minorities, have the right to see their communal views and customs treated with the utmost respect?'; and 'does the state have the right, the duty, to foster common civic values, and to strongly discourage caricaturing and other civic vices?' the policy's answer is clearly 'yes'. It attempts to strike a balance between the needs of the individual, of the various religious groups, and of the country as a whole as represented in/taken care of in public schools. That becomes apparent both in the explicit text and between the lines.

28. In the process of exploring a field of knowledge, a programme in Religion Education develops ways of knowing that are consistent with constitutional guarantees of human and civil rights to freedom of religion, thought and conscience. Religion Education allows for a free exploration of religious diversity in South Africa and the world, and is therefore consistent with and indeed promotes the freedom of religion. It does not seek to impose a unified, syncre-

tistic or state religion, and does not proceed from or advance any of these positions. It is about a civic understanding of religion, which is compatible with all major religious traditions. The policy is about the equality of all religions before the law; whether all religions are equal and true in a religious or philosophical sense falls outside of the scope of this policy.

35. The teaching of Religion Education must be sensitive to religious interests by ensuring that individuals and groups are protected from ignorance, stereotypes, caricatures, and denigration. Professional educators will have to develop programmes in Religion Education that serve the educational mission of public schools in a democratic South Africa.

Krüger, in his comments under the heading “4. Reflexive self-awareness, discipline of mind and professionalism”, identifies aspects of the training of teachers which should receive serious attention:

In some of the debates about the policy much has been made of the impossibility of teachers being ‘neutral’. Then, the only way for, say, Christian or Muslim teachers in the field of religion would be to use the public classroom as an occasion to confess their own faith, promote their own religion, and convert others to it. That clearly not being permitted in the policy, some critics seemed convinced that, since there is not other way of dealing with religion than the propagandistic one, the state, therefore, ‘must’ be set on a course of totalitarian and absolutistic positivism and centralistic indoctrination of some sinister state ideology or religion, evoking the fears of the worst of Nazi Germany and Communist Russia rolled into one.

Underlying such views, however, are certain misconceptions concerning the epistemological aspects of studying and teaching religion, and of the policy itself. Note that the policy simply does not enter into the questions of ultimate religious truth, without denying the religious validity of such ultimate questioning. But it stops well short of that discourse, and restricts itself – wisely, the author suggests, in a secular, pluralistic society – to the level of civic co-existence. The question whether any religion forbids or allows an impartial study of religions is a religious question, outside the interest and competence of a self-restrictive policy such as this. Neither does the author intend entering in such religious debates. Simply speaking as a scholar of religion about

the study and teaching of religions in the public sphere, the author will briefly mention a few pointers concerning some of these misconceptions.

In the academic study of religion, the word ‘epoche’ (literally: ‘bracketing’), coined in phenomenology, was developed to express what is at stake here. What may be expected of a professionally trained teacher, is epoche, not as the denial of one’s own personal biases and points of departure, but as a reflexive self-awareness of such personal factors (see article 25), plus the professional ability to be contextually (situationally) wise and skilful. The public classroom is a very specific context/ situation, not to be confused with, for example, a Sunday school class. That has nothing to do with being blank, or pretending to be blank. It has everything to do with honesty, fairness, discipline of mind, academic ability, social decorum, and professionalism. No matter what the personal religious views of the teacher may be (and which need not be concealed), every learner and parent has the right to assume that the rules of the academic enterprise and of the profession will be followed. Space does not allow going into more detail here as far as the practicalities of the matter are concerned.

So the point of the policy is not to promote ‘neutrality’, but to promote a certain kind of value-driven engagement with religion, one’s own and not one’s own, an engagement in which, for example, respect for the facts and for the self-understanding of other religions are given very high priority. All of this has been argued over and over in the academic study of religion.

#### ***4.2 Missiology and mission work***

In the press there appeared a statement by a number of Muslims that missionary work with the aim of converting them to Christianity infringes on their constitutional rights to religious equality, which they would like to be understood as that Christians should recognise Islam and other religions as also bringing religious salvation, just as they (the Christians) believe their Christianity does.

Unfortunately they have forgotten that religion equality is a legal term that defines the way in which a religious community or an individual as a religious being should be treated. It does not make any statement as to the specific religious nature of any belief, ideology or religious practice. However, religious rights could have an effect on the way missionary work should be done.

Verster (2008) underlines the radical relationship with Jesus Christ in his Letter to the Romans which gave him the unavoidable task of living according to the gospel and spreading the gospel – especially to the heathen. Rightly Van de Beek (2008) emphasises the fact that conversion is not making proselytes (a qualitative approach) but rather it has a qualitative perspective, as he defined it: “The final goal of mission is not making as many converts as possible, but changing reality according to the law of the Kingdom of God” or, in the words of Straehler (2008), a conversion to Christ “affects the whole of a person’s conduct”. Having discussed the Greek words *melanoeo* and *pisteuo* he then continues:

From a look at these key words it becomes apparent that conversion in the biblical understanding refers to a person accepting a new set of beliefs and switching his or her religious allegiance to Jesus Christ as his or her supreme authority, as Lord. It means to repent from sin and to put one’s faith in Christ as Saviour. These two titles – Saviour and Lord – were used by the early church to express this understanding of conversion.

Human rights are there to protect the individual from unfair pressure to change his religion, not for a religious community to be protected against losing adherents.

How should we go about developing a curriculum for missiology?

Firstly, one should remember that missiology is primarily a subject for the training of Christian ministers and missionaries. The author is convinced that, as such, it does not infringe on the constitutional rights of others. One should have noticed that the Bill of rights makes provision for the particularities of religious groups. If a person claims to be a Christian, he or she would have experienced a conversion that has changed his or her allegiance to Christ.

So, to have missiology as a subject in the study for the ministry should be seen as a constitutional right for the trainee. Nevertheless, in his training the trainee should be taught never to denigrate any religion/ world-view or its adherents, but rather to have respect and appreciation for the other religions/ world-views and respect and love for the adherents of other religions/ world-views. Perhaps the trainees should refer back to the Apostle Paul in Athens to find a biblical passage to illustrate the claim just made (Acts 17).

This does not contradict the fundamental claim that the trainees should be taught that without conversion nobody can become part of the Christian community.

### **4.3 Religious rights and the Christian mandate to spread the good news**

What is so far argued should make it clear that the Christian mandate entails per se no infringement on the religious rights of any person. The Christian cannot shrink away from this, because it is part and parcel of Christianity. The adherents of other religions/world-views should bear with their Christian neighbours just as they should bear with them.

Nevertheless, the implication is that the dissemination and promotion of Christianity are not achieved by coercion or in any way whatsoever which infringes on the bill of human rights.

### **Bibliography**

- CALDAS, CARLOS. 2009. Conversion and mission – A South-South dialogue, from the perspective of David Bosch and Orlando Costas. Special edition 1 of the *Journal for Christian scholarship*, 45. Association for Christian Higher Education: Bloemfontein.
- KRÜGER, KOBUS. 2003. The New Policy on Religion in Education: Theoretical Points of Departure. *Religio. Journal of religious studies of Unisa*:4-10.
- NATIONAL RELIGION EDUCATION POLICY. 1996. pdf - Adobe Reader.
- STRAEHLER, R. 2008. Coming to faith in Christ: Stages and transitions in conversion processes of Muslims. Unpublished paper of the Congress on Mission Conversion, 18-20 September, Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA. 1996. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, Act 108 of 1996.
- VAN DE BEEK, A. 2008. Which Conversion and Whose Conversion? Special edition 1 of the *Journal for Christian scholarship*, 45. Association for Christian Higher Education: Bloemfontein.
- VERSTER, P. 2009. The “Conversion of Paul” and Christian mission today. Special edition 1 of the *Journal for Christian scholarship*, 45. Association for Christian Higher Education: Bloemfontein.