THE VIEWS OF STUDENTS IN
TEACHERS' COLLEGES IN TANZANIA ON THE
TEACHING OF RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

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SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

Educational facilities in Tanzania are provided by two main bodies, the Government and the Voluntary Agencies. Under the German Administration up to 1918, these two systems—Government's and Mission's—were kept separate, but, following pressure from the Colonial Office, the British Administration in 1925 set the foundations for the fully integrated system that was finally established in 1961. As part of the new cooperation between the two partners, and again urged on by official Reports, Government in 1925 allowed the right of entry into all its schools of accredited representatives of the religions to instruct adherents of their own faith. Certain stipulations were made about the teaching, in particular regulations about arrangements for withdrawal for anyone not desiring the instruction which were enshrined in a conscience clause. Although this clause has been reworded a number of times and the system of education has become more and more Government controlled, these arrangements for the teaching of religion have remained.

The religious organisations wishing to take advantage of the opportunity for giving religious teaching were made themselves responsible for providing both the necessary financial support and the corps of
instructors. Unfortunately, they have not been able to respond to this opportunity as fully as everyone had hoped, and the teaching of religion has often fallen into disrepute. Two recent studies of existing facilities for teaching the subject are used to illustrate the current state of affairs.

In recent years, however, the Voluntary Agencies engaged in education in Tanzania have been taking steps to try to improve the situation and the survey reported here was first conceived as part of this activity. The existing problems in the teaching of religion are analysed into five main headings—justification and reasons for giving the teaching, content of the lessons, and the problems of instructors, finance and status—and a questionnaire was constructed to determine the views of some students in Teachers' Colleges about them.

A 20 per cent sample was chosen from the entire student population of the senior Teachers' Colleges in the country, and the students were requested to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each of 125 statements about the teaching of religion in schools. The statements had been collected to cover, as far as possible, all the more important points of view. A set of hypotheses was suggested as a basis for the interpretation of the results.
Contrary to expectations, the students showed a great interest in, and concern for, the teaching of religion in schools. They strongly approved the continued existence of lessons for religious instruction and were eager for general attendance at them, and they had clear views about the ways the teaching could be improved. They regarded the lessons from an educational rather than a narrowly religious point of view, and consequently emphasised modern methods of teaching, a broader syllabus and a more open-ended approach.

The responses of the students were also analysed according to sex, year in College and religious affiliation. Men were found to be more interested than women in the academic side of religious instruction and second year students were shown to have a more understanding and sympathetic approach than first year students. Muslims tended to disagree with Christians on anything specific to Christianity and to generally rank the subject lowest as a school activity. Protestants and Catholics were generally found to be basically in agreement, but Catholics tended to be the more extreme and dogmatic in their views and Protestants the more tolerant.

The survey revealed, therefore, that, despite the adverse conditions in the schools, students still considered religious instruction a necessary and
legitimate part of a child's school experience and had a deep concern for improving the teaching.