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Why a priest agrees there should be a ban on religious teaching in schools



BRIDGETOWN – Days after a university lecturer suggested that religious education should be scrapped from the school curriculum in Barbados, he's getting some support for his call from an unlikely source – a man of the cloth. Outspoken Anglican cleric Reverend Charles Morris actually agrees with University of the West Indies political scientist Tennyson Joseph, saying that “a lot of people take religious education in schools and they try to make our young people feel that they are sinners”.

“Let the church do its work, let the Ministry of Education do its work. The ministry is not obligated to teach religious education in schools and it should not,” the reverend, who is also a senior teacher at a secondary school, told the Barbados Today online newspaper.

“They are teaching doctrine more than anything else.”

Reverend Morris argued that Barbados is not a Christian society and Christianity should not be imposed on students while other religions are not taught.

“Barbados . . . is a free society, it is a tolerant society and we tolerate all kinds of religions. If they are going to teach Christianity in the schools, then they should teach all religions in the school. They should teach Islam, Hinduism, and more so Rastafarianism,” he insisted.

Last week, Joseph raised eyebrows when he said it was time the Ministry of Education cut out the “religious mumbo jumbo” and introduce a fully secular curriculum in Barbados’ schools.

He had argued that a universally accepted secular curriculum would eradicate any conflicts which may exist for non-Christian members of this island’s increasingly diverse society.