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Abstract Article

Paul and Women's Liberation, by ROBERT BANKS (*Interchange*, No. 18—published by AFES Graduates Fellowship, 405–411, Sussex Street, Sydney 200, Australia).

In recent years the movement for Women's Liberation has gained such momentum that countless books and articles have been written. Much of the 'liberation literature', particularly in the West, accuses Paul of being the real source of male oppression over women.

The author, delving deep into the real meaning of male-female relationships, focuses his attention on the fact that Paul's complete outlook can be understood only if we take Galatians 3:28 as our guiding principle. The author tells us in this lengthy article that the Scriptures do not enunciate the principle of male oppression over women. In the order of creation both man and woman are partners in a hierarchical sense as far as functional roles are concerned. Paul is not speaking about equality between man and woman, but about unity in Christ. Hence there is no question of male oppression.

The article convincingly shows how in Christ we are all liberated. To have a comprehensive grasp of Paul's outlook on women, the reader is advised to study the full article. p. 141

Some Thoughts on Curriculum Design for Theological Education

by PATRICIA J. HARRISON

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AN OLD adage has it that 'it is easier to move a cemetery than to change the curriculum'. At first sight, this appears absurd. Bible Colleges are forever changing the curriculum! But at the deeper level, there may be some truth in the saying. Most of our changes are largely a reshuffling of the present building bricks or an addition or subtraction here and there.

Why change the curriculum anyway? Why indeed, if it is achieving what we want as well as we can reasonably expect? But the many changes, and the comments one hears everywhere suggest that there is widespread dissatisfaction. Both extension and residence educators wonder whether their curricula are sufficiently life-related, whether they are too Western, too theoretical, or otherwise inadequate. They know that neither tradition or innovation should be followed for its own sake.

If your curriculum is completely satisfactory, you may not wish to read much further in this issue. It is addressed to those who are looking for other approaches. We will suggest just a few.

(1) The Biblical pattern of training indicates a basically practical approach. Learning is by seeing and doing as well as by hearing. It is like an apprenticeship, obedience-orientated and with stress on spiritual maturity. I would be the last one to plead for a dilution of basic theological and academic content, but a good curriculum will clearly put practical service in a very central position. (The article by George Patterson in this issue has something to say here.)

(2) The Biblical pattern is also individualized and takes careful account of the different gifts. A good curriculum cannot resemble a cookie mould, which turns out only pastors. Some kind of individualization, some electives, would seem necessary as well as some help for the student to discover and develop his particular gifts. p. 142

(3) It is important to realize that the 'pie' of knowledge can be cut in various ways. The way we traditionally divide into subjects is not the only possible way. An interesting new curriculum (not yet implemented) has been developed by the Christian & Missionary Alliance Bible School in Irian Jaya (Indonesia). They plan to combine theory and practice in some of their main courses. For example, the 'Life of Christ' is taught along with 'Sunday School Methods'. The 'Doctrine' course is combined with 'Topical Preaching', and a study of Romans with 'Expository Preaching'.

(4) A curriculum ought to be *functional*. It should be planned to achieve real (not merely visionary) objectives which relate to the actual leadership needs of the Church. One way is to begin with a careful list of the functions a graduate needs to perform and then list the things he will need to *know* in order to *do* those things. A more complete approach is that recommended by Dr. Ted Ward, which involves columns listing what the student should DO and what he should BE, and then listing what he needs to know to fulfil these things. Items in the KNOW column should correlate with something in at least one of the two other columns. We can build a course from the resultant objectives.

(5) A curriculum requires *balance*. Most readers will be aware of Dr. Ward's Split-Rail Fence analogy. A strong fence requires at least two solid rails—one we will call cognitive input, and the other field experience. It also needs well-spaced solid support posts. We can call these 'seminars' by which we mean *any* learning experiences (not just a literal 'seminar' or a class meeting) which help to *integrate* knowledge and practice. Many curricula have a very top-heavy cognitive input rail, a rather slim practical experience rail, and are shakiest of all in the support posts.

(6) A good curriculum aims to be as *integrated* as possible. Something deep in human nature craves for unity and relatedness. It is hard to obtain this sufficiently in a curriculum where all subjects are in water-tight compartments, and teachers have only a vague idea of what others are teaching. Research shows that the student is very unlikely to put all the pieces together on his own. The structure of the curriculum must itself consciously

provide as much integration as possible. This also means regular meetings among teachers where they find out what the others are doing. There are many ways of achieving a fair degree of integration. One can use a core curriculum of the kind which is designed around interdisciplinary p. 143 problems or make a partial use of this model with subjects which best lend themselves to it. Rarongo Theological College in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, has experimented with teaching partly by *themes*. Field work also provides an excellent, perhaps the best, integrative force (cf. Patterson's article). One course may meet objectives in a number of content areas. (Kinsler's *Jeremiah*, for example, teaches not only that book, but also much O.T. history, some homiletics, and in particular, an inductive method of study which can be applied to other books. It is an excellent example of an integrated course.) Case studies, comprehensive exams, integration seminars and integrating papers are methods used at various educational levels to achieve some kind of unity in a *smorgasbord* of subjects.

(7) A curriculum should be thoroughly *contextualized* to fit the local culture and situation. This is not possible to the extent desirable if teachers copy too slavishly the courses they have taken somewhere else, or if they borrow TEE courses indiscriminately.

(8) A *modular* curriculum can be very useful in situations where flexibility is desired (the Honduras curriculum is of this type). It is made up of self-contained units (which could be a week or several months in length) which (perhaps with some exceptions) can be taken in any order. Students do them when they need them in their ministry. This gets away from the idea of storing up knowledge for years ahead when it might be needed, and aims at providing what is needed now. It will be much better remembered, and any gaps can be made up by a required number for graduation. If this appears too fragmented, it is always possible to add some basic survey courses so that the student has pegs on which to hang other facts. Or part of a year's work can be offered this way and part in a more traditional way. Modules can be self-instructional packages (with the teacher available to help). These could be used far more than they are in residence schools, as well as in TEE. Or they can be guided research courses. A suggested order can be given, with opportunity for individuals or groups (by their decision) to deviate from this as needed. The benefits—better motivation, much better transfer to life, and better retention.

(9) Another interesting approach is the *Spiral Curriculum*, valuable for content subjects where the development of concepts rather than mere memorization of facts is important. Certain fundamental principles are introduced and illustrated in a concrete fashion, and as the student progresses, he keeps returning to these p. 144 same ideas, but with different illustrations and increasing complexity and theoretical components. The Science Research Associates Inc. have produced an elementary Social Science programme, for example, which follows this model and builds on carefully prepared fundamental ideas from a number of Social Sciences.

(10) A good curriculum takes into consideration not merely subjects, but *sequence and continuity*, with ample opportunity for review and review with increments. The designer considers both the natural sequence and logic of the subject-matter and the learning processes of the students, preferably using some researched findings rather than just hunches.

In the following article we will share samples of how a functional curriculum can be drawn up, and of how the fundamental ideas for a spiral curriculum might look.

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Miss Harrison is the Secretary for Theological Education by Extension in the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. p. 145