

THE ROLE OF THE BIBLE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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1 A CHANGING ROLE IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

On the first day of our conference we were confronted with unexpected thoughts about the future and about faith. Perhaps many of us are now hoping to receive some cosy reassurance when we deal with the role of the Bible. Is this not supposed to remain unchanged? To this question I have to reply however: No, not quite!

This reply is not based on my own wilful wish to startle anyone, but on the teaching and example of Jesus. By various sayings¹⁾ and actions²⁾ he indicated that he radically reinterpreted Scripture.³⁾ He assigned another role to Scripture than the Jewish religious establishment of his day. Instead of presenting texts from the Torah and the interpretations of authoritative rabbis, he used his own, original parables, sayings and interpretations. Apparently he was not constantly preoccupied with the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. But he was intensely interested in people and their ordinary daily life.⁴⁾

Precisely because of his concern for people Jesus *had* to reinterpret the writings of former centuries. We have to do the same, unless we wish the Bible to become a museum antique. The content of the Bible remains unchanged, but not the people reading it. Their ways of thinking and living are incessantly changing. Consequently the interpretation of the Book of ages inevitably has to change with the centuries.⁵⁾

If then we wish to take *Jesus* seriously, we shall have to take *people* seriously as well. That, in turn, brings us into touch with the dynamics of *changing* society. Moreover, these conferences about RE in *our* changing society confront us with a still greater responsibility. Every thinking inhabitant of Southern Africa should realize that we are in for change of a really escalating nature. As Christian believers we should therefore be completely yielded to God's guidance, and his timing.⁶⁾ If in this way we should be guided to

Scriptura 4 (1981) pp 53-72

use the Bible in unconventional ways, traditions of long standing (but of shortsighted, human origin, perhaps) should not deter us.

2 TWO LINES OF REFERENCE IN A SPECTRUM OF ROLES

Looking back on almost twenty centuries of Christian history, we may discern various roles that have been assigned to the Bible - as successive developments or as simultaneous diversities, some valid and true, others unfitting and misleading. But we may also discover what J D Smart calls "The Mystery of the Closed Bible":

"... the puzzling fact that the church school, after a century and a half of almost exclusive concentration upon Bible study, cannot and does not claim to have produced a church that is capable of understanding and using the Bible."⁷⁾

We have to admit that the Bible has been (and still is) misused as if it were a heavenly oracle,⁸⁾ or a Christian code of law,⁹⁾ or a source of proof-texts for the construction of doctrinal systems,¹⁰⁾ or even as a justification for subtle or undisguised selfishness.¹¹⁾ On the other hand, however, the Bible has been (and still is) allowed to play its rightful role as a remarkable collection of books, each conveying some special aspect(s)¹²⁾ of the divine message about the transformation of human life and relationships.¹³⁾

Having then a whole series of roles like a many-coloured spectrum before us, we may take two lines, representing the two extremes, as points of reference. I know this is an over-simplification, but to me it is quite useful. It helps me to evaluate the variety of the past and the present, and to plan for the future.

I therefore suggest that we focus our attention on the following two roles of the Bible:

- i) *Foundation for formal religion*
- ii) *Signpost to surrendered living.*

Where brevity is needed, I shall simply refer to the F-role and the S-role, respectively.

Spectrum of roles assigned to the Bible

F								S
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	>
V	V	V	V	V	V	V	>	>
V	V	V	V	V	V	>	>	>
V	V	V	V	V	>	>	>	>
V	V	V	V	>	>	>	>	>
V	V	V	>	>	>	>	>	>
V	V	>	>	>	>	>	>	>
V	>	>	>	>	>	>	>	>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(Actually these two roles are mutually exclusive, and mixtures of them should not be possible. Nevertheless, combinations are found - sometimes as strange incongruencies, but sometimes too as responsible integrations.)

I have been guided to these examples by various considerations, but especially by the words of John 5:39-40. Here we are confronted with the crucial distinction drawn by Jesus, as well as with his clearly implied exhortation:

"You study the Scriptures, because you think that in them you will find eternal life. And these very Scriptures speak about me! Yet you are not willing to come to me in order to have life."

2.1 The Bible as foundation for formal religion

It was precisely this role that most of the religious leaders of Jesus' time apparently assigned to the Torah, Prophets and Writings. They saw these Scriptures as a firm foundation, supporting an impressive superstructure of rituals and regulations. Although they believed in the dynamic origin of their divinely revealed instruction, their static view caused this teaching to petrify into a legalistic system. Apparently, however, they did not realize what they had lost. With the best intentions they¹⁴⁾ simply kept on embellishing their firmly founded formal religion.

In spite of Jesus' unmistakable message, and in spite of the eventual disappearance of the Pharisees as a group, the characteristic Pharisaic formalism was continued through the twenty succeeding centuries.¹⁵⁾

The F-role of the Bible may be traced from the initial periods during which Christian doctrine took shape, through medieval scholasticism and post-reformation orthodoxy to contemporary fundamentalism.¹⁶⁾

Its subtle symptoms and unfortunate results may probably be discerned wherever "Christians" are living.¹⁷⁾ And, as to this "Christian" country where our conference is being held, it is nowadays admitted by more and more that the socio-political consequences of the F-utilization of the Bible have been tragically disastrous.¹⁸⁾

2.2 The Bible as signpost to surrendered living

What Jesus advocated, was something entirely different from the time-consuming Scripture study,¹⁹⁾ the hair-splitting arguments and the never-ending legalistic additions of the scribes and other Pharisees. What Jesus proclaimed, was a self-surrendering encounter with God, leading to totally transformed relationships with God and fellow-men.²⁰⁾ In his message the crucial emphasis is not on the Holy Book, but on dynamic living.²¹⁾

"What was absolutely unique with Jesus was the presence in him of a new kind of human existence, a life centered unconditionally in the presence and power of God here and now, a life in the Spirit that was his strength and joy and which it was his mission to share with others that their lives might be transformed."²²⁾

Although this S-role of the Bible was uniquely exemplified and emphasized by Jesus,²³⁾ the rest of the Bible indirectly confirms its importance too. In the Old Testament the narrative sections, the poetry and the wisdom, and especially the prophetic parts all point, in one way or another, towards an obedient surrender to God. Paul, not quite forgetting his Pharisaic training, made a varied use of the Jewish Bible of his day.²⁴⁾ But still, his own contribution to the New Testament is of such a nature that it can hardly play any other than the S-role. Letters sharing inner experiences and sincere exhortations like those in Rom 6:13, 12:1-2, 2 Cor 5:15, Gal 2:19-20, 5:16, Eph 4:23-24, Phil 2:3-5, Col 3:17 and 1 Thes 5:23 may never be degraded to an F-role.

This S-role of the Bible may also be traced through the history of

Christianity. It was not always figuring prominently, but we may thank God for the way he equipped people with this vital insight into the role of the Bible. Some were eminent scholars, others were ordinary, perhaps completely unknown, men and women.

3 EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF THE BIBLE IN OUR PRESENT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As a next step I now wish to indicate how a model of biblical roles (for instance our "spectrum" model) may be used to evaluate the various elements of our present Religious Education, e g syllabuses, handbooks, lessons, teachers, and students. It should be completely clear that no one of us can produce any proper evaluation without first launching an enormous investigation. And in our present South Africa, where we still have to cope with the tragic topiecedness of education, such a task will be even more demanding than elsewhere.

I therefore intend nothing more than just suggesting how each of us may attempt an evaluation of the way the Bible is being used in each particular part of our RE. Where we ourselves, our own lessons and our own students are concerned, the conclusions may be too personal to share - except with the Lord when we are expecting his guidance and equipment. Concerning handbooks and syllabuses, however, we may be constrained to discuss our (subjective!) findings with others. We may do this with due humility, but with enthusiastic conviction as well.

In my little experiment I am using a stanine rating (ranging from 1 to 9), as shown on p 55 above. A rating of 1 would indicate my surmise that the Bible is only used in an unmitigated F-role. With a rating of 9 I would convey my impression that the Bible is granted an unhampered S-role.

3.1 *Syllabuses*

3.1.1 SCRIPTURE (Provincial Administration of the Cape of Good Hope) Although I agree with the *Aims*, I cannot agree with some of the statements offered as "implications".²⁵⁾ The themes, sub-themes and selections from Scripture (sub A to std 10) are very traditional,

those of certain standards²⁶⁾ revealing some more originality though. My rating for this syllabus is 4.²⁷⁾

3.1.2 SCRIPTURE (Department of Internal Affairs)

This syllabus appears to be an edited version of that for white schools. In some cases I do not think that the editing has been an improvement,²⁸⁾ but in the *Aims* and their implications, as well as in the *General Remarks*, there are significant improvements.²⁹⁾ In addition, the *Aims* are preceded by *General Principles* which reveal important insights. My rating is 5 in this case.

3.1.3 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Department of Education and Training)

This syllabus is totally different from the previous two. In this case the general introductions to the syllabuses of the various standards reveal still more, and even more penetrating insight. The aim of the Bible is said to be "to show the way to salvation".³⁰⁾ The chief aim in Religious Education "is not what we have taught the pupil to know; nor ... what we have taught the pupil to do. It is what the pupil has learnt to be"³¹⁾ As more specific objectives the relationships with God and fellow-men are strongly emphasized.³²⁾ Self-effort is deliberately ruled out³³⁾ and transformed living is underlined as the *true test*.³⁴⁾ A special sensitivity for the year-to-year development of the pupil is clearly stated and effectively implemented.³⁵⁾ As can be expected, the content of this syllabus is altogether different from one based on the Genesis-to-Revelation obsession. My rating, therefore, is 7. (It could even have been higher, but on my restricted scale I have to allow leeway for another surprise.)

3.2 Handbooks

Regarding these books (which are not published anonymously like syllabuses) I shall confine myself to a few general statements.³⁶⁾

Handbooks are usually written to go with a particular syllabus. Therefore, the role which that syllabus assigns to the Bible will to a great extent be reflected in the concomitant books. But not necessarily. An author may of course have a clearer vision of the role

of the Bible than the syllabus designers.

Although I have never had the time to engage in a comparative study of RE handbooks, I have gained the impression that I would consider ratings ranging from 3 to 9. Please remember, however, that I am only trying to evaluate the roles assigned to the Bible. It sometimes happens that a book which restricts the Bible to a very superficial role may be quite useful in certain respects. A teacher realizing the inherent shortcomings in such a book may nevertheless use it for his own, specific reference purposes. But to prescribe it for his students may be an unwise thing to do.

3.3 Lessons

Some teachers apparently think that the important thing is to read, or to let students read, several "verses" or a paragraph or even more.³⁷⁾ The same teachers usually consider it necessary too to relate the content of the whole chapter or section (even in a senior class). However, such an exhibition of biblical words and/or narratives may perhaps deserve a rating as low as 2 or 1 on our scale.

On the other hand, it is possible to devote a bare minimum of time in a lesson to the relevant Bible section, but to do this so effectively that those few minutes may boost our rating to 9.³⁸⁾

Let us remember the crucial importance of the RE period. Conference and committee rooms, libraries and studies may provide significant contributions, but the venue where *religious education* successfully takes place (or miserably fails to take place!) is, mainly,³⁹⁾ the class room.⁴⁰⁾ In the precious minutes when teacher, student and Bible are interacting within the so-called didactic triangle, life-transforming events may occur. If they do occur, they are of course due to the miracle working power of God's Spirit. Still, our human responsibility is to give the Bible full scope to play its dynamic S-role. Our constant, and honest evaluation of the role of the Bible in the RE lesson is therefore of far-reaching importance.

3.4 Teachers

In a certain sense, however, the role of the Bible in the life of the teacher is still more important. At last year's conference the example was mentioned of the student teacher giving a brilliant lesson with, however, a "metallic clink" in her voice - because of her atheism.

Each of us should therefore frankly evaluate him or herself in this regard. But in doing so, let us avoid all F-criteria, like the amount of biblical knowledge, or the ability to quote texts or use ecclesiastic/evangelistic phraseology. Let us employ the S-criterion of uncompromising yieldedness. Are we ready to let the Word of God address us, as penetratingly as may be necessary?⁴¹⁾ Are we constantly living as proposed in Rom6:13?⁴²⁾

3.5 Students

In his book with the significant title, *Education for Christian Living*, R C Miller states:

"The quality of teaching is judged primarily by the results in the lives of the students."⁴³⁾

He also lists "various techniques to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior"⁴⁴⁾ - profile sheets, reports, interviews and tests.⁴⁵⁾

Such a process of evaluating is demanding, but cannot be neglected as if it were an optional extra. Those of us who are convinced that the Bible indeed is a signpost to surrendered living, should keep alert for any encouraging symptom of such surrendered living. Of course, we shall never know with certainty whether an observable action of another stems from a genuine, inner attitude, or merely from a pretending bit of self-effort.

Nevertheless, let us maintain a benevolent attentiveness for the role the Bible is playing in the lives of our students. This should constantly remind us of our main aims in RE, and of our total dependence on God. For -

"With all of our plans and standards and techniques and theological insights, it is God who does the educating. We are channels of his grace"⁴⁶⁾

4 HOW TO USE THE BIBLE AS SIGNPOST TO SURRENDERED LIVING

With this caption I wish to make two things very clear:

- i) My unhesitating choice for what I have sketched as the S-role of the Bible;
- ii) My unrelenting urge that our deliberations are to be put into action.

With my choice I do not want to exert any dominating pressure. I only wish to share the convictions to which I have been guided through my years of study, ministry and teaching.⁴⁷⁾ I do realize that I am choosing an extreme view,⁴⁸⁾ but I am confident that this is exactly the extreme set by Jesus himself. I plead, therefore, that in our changing society we should not remain satisfied with outdated views on the Bible, simply because they are traditional and/or appear to be very pious.

Let me then offer some suggestions about *how* we may set about *doing* something.

4.1 Syllabus reform

I hope our speaker from abroad will forgive me for infringing on her field, but before she opens the international perspective, there is a splendid innovation from East Africa I must mention.⁴⁹⁾ I am referring to the syllabus for CHRISTIAN LIVING TODAY,⁵⁰⁾ drawn up by a committee of Catholics and Protestants from five countries, under the name of the "Rugaba Workshop". The aims⁵¹⁾ stated in this syllabus, the major themes⁵²⁾ and sub-themes, the five dimensions in which each of the sub-themes is developed,⁵³⁾ and the selections of Old and New Testament portions for study and discussion all satisfy me to such an extent that I applaudingly give it a rating of 9!

Here we have a complete breakaway from the traditional pattern (Genesis to Revelation, chapter by chapter, content plus "application",

synthesis into propositional "truths"). The Rugaba syllabus adopts the following fresh approach:

- A *Life-situation* (The student is guided to see himself in his present situation and understand his double background of African tradition and Church history.)
- B *Bible* (Motivated by the questions and problems raised by the life-situation, the student is guided to seek the light of God's revelation in numerous relevant sections from the Old and the New Testament.)
- C *Synthesis* (Having considered the concrete situation and the meaning derived from the Bible, the student may respond to God, and may, by the guidance of the Spirit, reach significant conclusions.)

Whereas the traditional, content-centred syllabus often has its roots in the legalistic, Pharisaic, F-type preoccupation with Scripture, the Rugaba syllabus is in the life-centred dimension - precisely the dimension of Jesus' ministry, teaching and preaching.

My *FIRST SUGGESTION* ⁵⁴⁾ therefore is:

That this afternoon's program on syllabuses (paper, response and workshop) be regarded as the beginning of a Southern African project, following the excellent Rugaba example ⁵⁵⁾ and also taking into account the existing syllabus of our Department of Education and Training. ⁵⁶⁾

4.2 *Matching handbooks*

In this case too, I wish to link my suggestion to the brilliant pair of Rugaba handbooks: *Christian Living Today*. ⁵⁷⁾ They are altogether different from modified Children's Bibles with some Palestine pictures. They have pages with a magnetic fascination, filled with brief sections from contemporary life and brief commentaries on the relevant Bible passages. Questions for meditation and discussion abound, as well as message-laden photographs, illustrations and motifs. Colour is used economically but effectively. The summaries and synthesis sections are invaluable. In addition each book has two exceedingly useful reference sections, presenting global views of the Old Testament,

inter-testamental period,⁵⁸⁾ New Testament and Church history, as well as a paragraph per book survey of the books of the Bible, and three time charts.

The average allocation of space for a sub-theme is as follows:

	Book One	Book Two
Life-situation	15 pp	8 pp
Commentary, notes and questions about Bible passages	6 pp	4 pp
Summary and synthesis	2 pp	2 pp

As could be expected of handbooks written on the basis of such a syllabus, and under the title of *Christian Living Today*, these books really set the stage for the Bible in its S-role. Here too, my rating is a well-deserved 9.

My *SECOND SUGGESTION*⁵⁹⁾ is:

That as soon as a syllabus plan gets under way, the initial planning of the accompanying handbooks should start,⁶⁰⁾ so that no time will be lost once the syllabus is approved.

4.3 *Inspiring lessons*

Whereas the reform of syllabuses and the writing of handbooks may take a considerable time, lesson preparation may change the same day when a teacher acquires the necessary insight. Fortunately, many teachers already have a clear vision of the S-message of the Bible. Let all such teachers be encouraged to carry on with enthusiasm, regardless of any staunch F-establishment.

But what can be done to convince those still venerating the Bible as an F-document? Though difficult to believe, certain students (in 1981 AD!) are being taught the following:

The Bible should occupy a fixed position on the teacher's table. No other book is ever to be placed on top of the Bible. When the Bible is read (by teacher or student) the reader should stand, and wait for a reverent silence. All Bibles should be kept immaculately neat and no underlining or marginal notes may be

allowed - not even if it is the student's *own* Bible!!! And these rules are to be *strictly* enforced, up to std 10!⁶¹⁾

For the sake of the insights needed for lesson preparation in our *present, changing* society, I therefore make a

THIRD SUGGESTION :

That RE teachers plan refresher courses and/or "re-fresh" themselves about topics like the following:

- The coming into being of the biblical books⁶²⁾
- The sinfulness of bibliolatry⁶³⁾
- The understanding of the Bible⁶⁴⁾
- The life-centred approach to the Bible⁶⁵⁾
- The nature and function of biblical language⁶⁶⁾
- The distinction, where necessary, between the meaning of a passage *then* and the meaning *now*.⁶⁷⁾

And a *FOURTH SUGGESTION :*

That RE teachers break away as much as possible from old-fashioned lesson structures (Bible reading and exposition + application) and experiment with more imaginative varieties like the following:

Awareness and clarification of problem → proposed solutions (biblical and extra-biblical) → selection of the best solution → testing in practice;⁶⁸⁾

Newspaper clipping → Bible passage — dialogical conversation⁶⁹⁾ or discussion → conclusion;

Relevant background for events recorded in Bible → attempt to envisage life-situation of those people → their ways of thinking, their world and religious views, the decisions they had to make.

Let me briefly illustrate the difference, taking the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector (Luke 18:9-14) as an example. If the Bible is used in an F-role, the lesson may proceed as follows:

- i) Reading of passage
- ii) Explanation of Pharisaic hypocrisy and Jewish contempt for tax-collectors
- iii) Emphasis on striking contrast(s) (conceit/humility; self-righteousness/dependence upon grace; false/true prayer)

- iv) Application: e g the correct way to receive God's gift of righteousness.

Let us now see how this same passage is used in *Christian Living Today*.

It is one of eight passages used in the sub-theme *Justice in Society*, and is preceded by the following: newspaper headlines from over the world, several photos (e g a student talking in a library where others are quietly studying), several anecdotes (e g senior pupils bullying newcomers), traditional ideas of justice, examples of injustice and of the opposition against injustice, extracts from a declaration of human rights, examples from Church history (slavery, oppression of minorities).

The Bible passages are arranged under the following captions:

Called to human relationships
 People before piety
 A New Vision
 Power to relate

Luke 18:9-14 is discussed in this last section. Let me quote just a few sentences:

"*The religious leaders*. those who prided themselves on being learned in the Law, were the least open to the new power at work in Jesus. ... Luke uses this story of Jesus to show the failure of the Law to bring people to suitable relationships, and also to give another example of God's mercy. ... It was this wrong understanding of the function of the Law which Jesus continually rejected. ... The Law was looked on as a summary of all wisdom and as a complete and sure guide of conduct, assuring a person's good relationships with God. ... He (Jesus) came to replace the Law as the one and sure means by which a person can maintain good relationships with God and his fellow men."⁷⁰⁾

In almost each one of these sentences the subtle but essential distinction between the false F-certainty of the Pharisees and the striking S-message of Jesus may be seen.

4.4 *Transformed teachers*

RE teachers have a special responsibility to use their own Bibles as signposts for their own surrendered living. Students are not easily

bluffed. They know when the teacher (or preacher!) is trying to look as if he understands the distinction between the F-dimension and the S-dimension. They immediately grasp when the teacher's lack of this insight is betrayed by his actions, his words, or just by his attitude.

Therefore my *FIFTH SUGGESTION* :

That we as RE teachers remember we should continually let God transform us inwardly by a complete change of mind.⁷¹⁾

This inner change will be revealed in many ways, in the RE class-room and elsewhere. Such a teacher will, for instance -

experience biblical inspiration as an inspiring reality (instead of learning it as a doctrine),

know sin as an attitude of selfish revolt against God's will (instead of as a list of don'ts),

practise obedience to God's guidance on account of a constant, inner yearning (and not on account of a sporadic sense of duty),

live in a relationship of faith (instead of merely subscribing to confessions of faith),

experience effective deliverance from sin and sinful attitudes (instead of trying to improve his habits).

4.5 Religiously educated students

We do not exert pressure on our students to put their lives at God's disposal. In fact, the moment we start any kind of pressurizing, we are out of the S-dimension. What we can do, and are called to do, however, is to show them what it means to understand the Word of God and respond to it. We should also give them enough practice in using their Bibles as signposts to surrendered living.

After all, RE is aimed at nothing less than the surrendered living⁷²⁾ of the adults and leaders of tomorrow. Let us constantly remember this challenging objective, especially in our changing South Africa, where so much honest repentance and penetrating renewal of relation=

ships are needed.

My *SIXTH SUGGESTION* therefore is:

That we as RE teachers are constantly to remind our students that the Bible is meant for nothing less than renewed living - being delivered from the old life of self-effort and failure, and experiencing the life of divine renewal, resulting in relationships of honest, vigorous love.

And my *SEVENTH SUGGESTION*, specifically necessary in our changing *South African* society, is as follows:

That we as RE teachers, working (for the time being) among various so-called population groups, should look for and utilize opportunities where students representing our whole population can get together to discuss and find guidance about vital issues like *Christian* identity, and *Christian unselfishness*.

Let us then continually be yielding ourselves into the divine encounter "in order to have life."⁷³⁾ Let us allow God to deliver us from misusing the Bible in the superficial piety of the establishment.⁷⁴⁾ May we and our students be guided, *via* the understanding of the Bible, *into* surrendered living in our changing society.

"The Bible finally is not concerned with right morality, right piety, or right doctrine. Rather it is concerned with *faithful relationships* between God and his people, between all the brothers and sisters⁷⁵⁾ in his community, and between his community and the world he has made. Faithful relationships of course can never be reduced to formulae but live always in the free, risking exchange that belongs to covenanting."⁷⁶⁾

This kind of living is *not* impossible. Jesus said,

"What is impossible for man is possible for God."⁷⁷⁾

He also said,

"I have come in order that you may have life - life in all its fullness."⁷⁸⁾

F O O T N O T E S

- 1) Cf especially the antitheses in Mat 5:21-48.
- 2) Cf especially those causing the sabbath conflicts (e g Mark 2:1-3:6).
- 3) Cf J D G Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, SCM, London, 1977, pp 97s, 100-102.
- 4) L Grollenberg, *A Bible for Our Time*, SCM, London, 1979, pp 28-30.
- 5) *Ibid*, p 2.
- 6) Cf Michael Cassidy and Luc Verlinden, *Facing the new Challenges - the message of PACLA*, Evangel Publishing House, Kisumu, Kenya, 1978, pp 53-55 (Speech of Mr R Ncube: God at Work in Africa Today - Southern Africa.
- 7) James D Smart, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, undated (1955?), p 132.
- 8) Cf Douglas S Hubery, *Teaching the Christian Faith Today*, Chester House Publications, London, 1975, p 93 (quoted in J C Malan, "Religious Freedom in our Predominantly Christian Society", 1980 conference paper, p 10).
- 9) Morna D Hooker, "How should we use the New Testament?", article in *Epworth Review* (ed: J Stacey), Methodist Publishing House, London, Vol I, No 1 (Jan 1974), p 92.
- 10) Cf L McKenzie, *Christian Education in the 70's*, Alba House, New York, 1971, p 10 (quoted in my paper referred to, p 16).
- 11) Like the "inequality, separation and discrimination, ... brutal domination and the refined versions thereof" I mentioned last year. Paper referred to, p 12 (Cf p 10).
- 12) Cf J Kingsley Dalpadado, *Reading the Bible*, St Paul Editions, Boston, 1973, pp 21, 304-314.
- 13) "So then the Bible remains forever new because its whole concentration is essentially not upon laws and rules and regulations, but upon men and women and their relationship with each other and their relationship with God." William Barclay, *Introducing the Bible*, The Bible Reading Fellowship, London, 1972 (2nd reprint, 1977), p 17.
- 14) Always with exceptions, of course. From New Testament, and even Old Testament times up to the present day God is delivering men (Jews and non-Jews) from a merely formal religion.
- 15) Cf the prediction in 2 Tim 3:5: "... they will hold to the outward form of our religion, but reject its real power."
- 16) Cf Sara Little, *The Role of the Bible in Contemporary Christian Education*, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1961 (3rd printing, 1966) p 25.
- 17) "Christianity, where it seems to have been accepted, would appear in many cases to be accepted only with the 'top of the mind'; it has not become the fundamental dynamic affecting the whole of the

personality." Hubery, *op cit*, p 19. Cf also Eugene A Nida, *Religion across Cultures*, Harper & Row, New York, 1968, p 44.

- 18) If the master-minds who created the system of formal discrimination (and those who are still trying to defend it) were indeed taking Christianity seriously, were (are) they not perhaps venerating the Bible in a mere F-role?
- 19) Jesus' admonition found in John 5:39-40 does not only apply to an engrossment in the Scriptures of the *Old* Testament. By clear implication he was also forewarning against a misguided preoccupation with the *New* Testament writings yet to be.
- 20) Cf Grollenberg, *op cit*, pp 28-29, and James D Smart, *The ABC's of Christian Faith*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1968 (5th printing, 1975), pp 15, 22.
- 21) Cf J Suggit, "Principles of Scriptural Exposition", Paper read at seminar on Authority and Use of Scripture, UNISA, 1978, p 7. Cf also the well-known antitheses in Mat 5:21-48.
- 22) James D Smart, *The Past, Present, and Future of Biblical Theology*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1979, p 116. Cf Joseph L Breault, *A Transformed Mind and Heart*, Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1978, pp 1, 9, 17-19, 141-142.
- 23) Cf Grollenberg, *op cit*, p 30.
- 24) *Ibid*, pp 53-57.
- 25) Especially the abstractness of the first part of the second implication (2.(b) in the Primary section, B.(ii) in the Secondary section), and the self-effort implied in the third one (2.(c), B.(iii), respectively). In the first of the General Remarks (3.(a), C1, respectively) the same abstract accent is found once again ("the emphasis shall consistently fall upon the accepted fundamental truths of Scripture"). And eventually this abstractness reaches a climax in the std 10 syllabus where the following "BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE UNIVERSAL AND FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN BELIEFS AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE" is found:
 - "1 *The Creation ...*
 - 2 *The Fall, God's Judgment on sin and His Commandment ...*
 - 3 *Atonement and Redemption ...*
 - 4 *The End of the World*"

Scripture, Department of Education, Provincial Administration of the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town, undated (1974?).
- 26) E g sub A and std 3.
- 27) Without elaborating on the syllabus for *Biblical Studies* as drafted by the Joint Matriculation Board and followed by most (if not all) departments of education, I may deplorably add that my rating in that case is also a meagre 4.
- 28) Especially the double inclusion of the law (stds 8 and 10), with in std 10 a caption which does not point to self-surrender but to self-effort.
Syllabus for Scripture in the High School, Department of Internal Affairs, Cape Town. Education Bulletin B/72, Dec 1972.

- 29) By which all the paragraphs criticized in footnote 25 are definitely improved.
- 30) Std 6, par A.4.
Syllabus for Religious Instruction, Department of Education and Training, Pretoria, 1974/5.
- 31) Std 6, par B.1.
- 32) Std 6, par B.2.(a) and (b).
- 33) Std 6, par B.2.(c).
- 34) Std 6, par B.2.(d).
- 35) Cf std 8, parr C.1-7, std 9, par A., std 10, par A.
- 36) Those who are more inquisitive may take a look at J A Loader's thought-provoking paper, "The Use of the Bible in Conventional South African Theology", read at seminar on Authority and Use of Scripture, UNISA, 1978.
- 37) I agree with S J Vorster's warning against lengthy readings, but disagree when he wants the Bible to be the point of departure in every single lesson. J G van Niekerk (ed), *Die Metodiek van Godsdiensoonderrig in die Primêre Skool*, Interkerklike Uitgewers=trust, Pretoria, 1978, p 95.
- 38) Cf the following contrast between a teacher's procedure on secondary and on primary level: "Wenn er mit Reifenden 40 Minuten lang im Gespräch bleibt über eine Lebensfrage und in die letzten fünf Minuten den Anspruch des Gotteswortes in das Gespräch einbringt, so kann das bibel-didaktisch genau so richtig sein wie eine biblische Erzählstunde auf der Unterstufe." A Barth, *Die Bibel im Religionsunterricht*, Verlag Ludwig Auer, Donauwörth, 1973, p 135.
- 39) We should never forget the importance of the student's contact (with teachers, other leaders of youth, and *parents*) outside the class-room. Even friends, other relatives and other people in general may play their important parts in the religious education of the student.
- 40) In school *and* Sunday school.
- 41) Cf Heb 4:12, and Barth, *op cit*, p 47.
- 42) "... give yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life, and surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes." Cf also Gal 2:20.
- 43) Randolph C Miller, *Education for Christian Living*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1956 (2nd printing, 1963), p 392.
- 44) *Ibid*, p 389.
- 45) *Ibid*, pp 389-392 (In each case several possibilities are mentioned.)
- 46) *Ibid*, p 396.
- 47) My teaching has included all levels from std 3 to std 10, and from 1st year to Hons BA.

- 48) Cf p 54 above.
- 49) *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi!*
- 50) The East African Certificate of Education Syllabus 223. Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, *Christian Living Today*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1974 (Book One)/1975 (Book Two) (Both books reprinted in 1977).
- 51) With their emphasis on the student's relating his life to God's revelation in Jesus Christ, and also relating his Christian faith to his life in his changing and developing society. *Op cit*, Book Two, p 142.
- 52) " I Man in a Changing Society
 II Order and Freedom in Society
 III Life
 IV Man and Woman
 V Man's Response to God through Faith and Love" *Loc cit*.
- 53) "1 He may see himself in his present situation. (*Present Situation*)
 2 He may understand himself as a product of his traditional African milieu, formed in African culture and values, and influenced by the technology, ideas and value systems of the rest of the world. (*African Tradition*)
 3 He may understand himself as a product of Christian history, influenced by various Christian traditions in Africa. (*Church History with Emphasis on Africa*)
 4 He may look at himself in his own situation in this changing world, seeking its meaning for himself in the light of God's revelation as mirrored forth in the Bible, of which the fullest expression is in Christ. (*Bible*)
 5 Having fully considered the experiences and circumstances of his life, he may give an enlightened response to God."
- 54) Cf also my suggestions in my paper read at the First conference on Religious Education in our Changing Society, Univ of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1980, "Religious Freedom in our Predominantly Christian Society", pp 18-19.
- 55) With due attention of course to the forthcoming HSRC report, the expectations about a unitary education system for South Africa, timely proposals to the existing syllabus authorities, and copy-right issues where necessary.
- 56) Cf p 58 above (3.1.3).
- 57) *Op cit*.
- 58) Cf Jean L Holm, *Teaching Religion in School*, Oxford University Press, London, 1975, pp 96-97.
- 59) Cf also my suggestions at the 1980 conference: paper referred to, pp 19-20.
- 60) From the acknowledgements on the copyright page of *Christian Living Today* it is clear that experimental teaching began before the syllabus was completed, and that many teachers offered valuable suggestions early enough to be incorporated into the books.

- 61) I prefer *not* to reveal my source in this case!
- 62) Cf William Barclay, *The Making of the Bible*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1961 (5th printing, 1967).
- 63) Cf Malan, paper referred to, p 10.
- 64) Cf David Stacey, *Interpreting the Bible*, Sheldon Press, London, 1976.
- 65) Cf Holm, *op cit*, pp 90-95.
- 66) Cf R C Briggs, *Interpreting the New Testament Today*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, New York, 1969 (2nd printing, 1973) pp 250-269, Holm, *op cit*, pp 92-93, and James D Smart, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, undated (1955?) pp 150-151.
- 67) Cf William G Doty, *Contemporary New Testament Interpretation*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1972, pp 132-156.
- 68) Miller, *op cit*, pp 187-189.
- 69) "Vieles wird im Gespräch klar, das in den Worten der Botschaft zunächst noch nicht eindeutig zu erkennen war. Undenkbar ist es, dass jemand eine solche Botschaft nur sachlich weitergeben könnte." Barth, *op cit*, p 21.
- 70) Pastoral Institute of Eastern Africa, *op cit*, Book One, p 100.
- 71) Rom 12:2.
- 72) "Der Bibelunterricht meint den Glauben, die Liebe und das Tun der Schüler und des Lehrers vom ersten bis zum letzten Satz. Er geht vollkommen auf christliche Existenz aus, und es gibt für ihn kein Aufsuchen *blosser* Erkenntniseinsichten." G Stachel, *Der Bibelunterricht*, Benziger-Verlag, Einsiedeln, 1967, p 109. Cf also Little, *op cit*, p 126, and Stacey, *op cit*, p 116.
- 73) John 5:40. Cf Little, *op cit*, pp 108, 155.
- 74) Cf Mat 23.
- 75) With special emphasis in South Africa!
- 76) Walter Brueggemann, *The Bible Makes Sense*, St Mary's College Press, Winona, Minnesota, 1977 (2nd printing, 1978), p 150.
- 77) Luke 19:27.
- 78) John 10:10.