

EXEGESIS AND LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

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The following syllabus and language requirements are deemed necessary for the proper pursuance of Biblical Studies:

- BS I A general theoretical introduction to exegesis and practical aspects (e g Identification of exegetical errors).
- BS II Cōncentration on historico-critical and gramma-tico-historical exegesis.
- BS III Exercises in text-immanent exegesis.

From the above the following may be projected and elaborated:

1 THE ROLE OF EXEGESIS IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

It is not the aim of Biblical Studies to produce independent exegetes or theologians, but rather to provide a theoretical foundation or substructure, and to make possible a practical application that will enable the student to critically evaluate and to utilize the exegesis (e g commentaries) of others. In other words, exegesis in the strict sense of the word, based on the original languages, will not be done. What will be required will be a controlled study of the text with particular reference to such matters as structure, historical context, general hermeneutic principles and avoidance of exegetical errors.

2 SOUND THEORETICAL BASIS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In order to achieve 1 (above), a sound theoretical foundation will have to be laid.

The theory must also be capable of application. This will entail that the student will, in a given passage:

- be able to identify the exegetical errors of expositors;
- be able to utilize the results of such expositors, i.e. be able to evaluate critical literature such as commentaries;
- be able to answer questions on the historical and immediate context;
- be able to formulate the message.

3 COMMENTARIES

The best scientific commentaries available to undergraduate students should be employed.

Students should be given careful guidance regarding the types of commentaries available (both sets and individual), and in regard to what they should look for in commentaries, in other words sound guidance in both the critical evaluation and use of commentaries.

4 LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

A knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not a prerequisite for studying commentaries critically.

At undergraduate level it is preferable that guidance be given in the use of commentaries. Especially at third-year level, a reading knowledge of French, German or Dutch should be required. This would immediately open up a whole new world of scientific association with the Bibel and is more profitable than Greek I and Hebrew I - viewed in the light of the declared role and aim of exegesis in Biblical Studies.

A minimum of Hebrew and Greek could actually be more "harmful" than useful since in the normal course of events a first year course is merely an introduction to the second year. Thus an independent exegesis can in any case not be accomplished on the basis of only one year's conventional course in Hebrew or Greek.

As regards post-graduate work, once again independent exegesis is not the goal, but rather a more advanced treatment of critical literature as well as a more intensive study of the textual analyses of scholars. Hence, language requirements are necessary at post-graduate level, although con=

sideration must be given to the question whether the conventional first year courses are suitable therefor. The latter are generally nothing more than introductions to second-year courses and would consequently need to be adapted and restructured.

It is recommended that congress consider the following statements and decide accordingly:

- 1 It is the aim of exegesis in Biblical Studies to critically evaluate the exegesis of *others* (e g commentaries), rather than practise independent exegesis.
- 2 At *under-graduate* level a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not necessary.
- 3 Especially at *third-year* level a knowledge of modern languages such as French, German or Dutch should be a high priority.
- 4 At *post-graduate* level a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew should be required.
- 5 The conventional first-year courses in Greek and Hebrew are not suitable for post-graduate work in Biblical Studies. Specially designed courses - aimed at the requirements of Biblical Studies - should be introduced. This could be presented by the departments of Semitic languages and Greek, or, if need be, by the Biblical Studies department itself.