

Title - What sort of Bible Colleges do we need for 21st Century?**Author – Dr. Derek Tidball****Date – March 2006****Word count - 5388**

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The rapidly changing world in which we live demands that every business and industry examines both its purpose and method of achieving its goal regularly. Retooling, re-engineering and even more radically diversifying operation is essential. So many top 100 companies are no longer found a few years later. Kodak, overtaken by the digital revolution, has had to lay off staff wholesale. M&S once market leader has been overtaken by market trends as others produced more fashionable clothes at cheaper prices. Dixons, the electrical goods retailer, no longer sells video recorders and so many are now downloading their music direct onto their iPod's that the future of record and DVD stores looks questionable. The supermarket has replaced the corner shop. Globalisation has set in, meaning that virtually any city in the world hosts identical shops, with very little local flavour and variety left.

The Bible College world is no more cocooned from wider trends than the commercial world I have described. It is affected by changes in the wider environment no less than others and consequently needs to be constantly reviewing its provision and goals no less than others. Two large trends that have major impact in the West are changes in education and changes in belief. Educational changes include changing educational philosophies, the introduction of different learning styles and the transformations that have taken place in the university sector as education has been commodified and managerialised, as there has been a move from theoretical to applied and vocational education, and as the UK Government's policy has been to raise the number of university entrants to fifty per cent of the relevant age cohort.

Some years ago the reigning education mantras asked four basic questions about proposed courses:

Who do you want to teach?
What do you want to teach them?
How do you want to teach them?
Why do you want to teach them?

They remain relevant but rarely addressed questions in many Bible Colleges (at least from my experience in the wider European College scene) who continue to do what they have always done, regardless of the wider context.

In this wider educational context those questions gave rise to asking whether the institution was fit for the purpose stated. Education, like any other section of life,

suffers from the fashion of the moment and the current fashion is to ask not about fitness for purpose but fitness of purpose. The concern is still with questions about aims and objectives or learning outcomes, as they are now called, but to ask them with the added dimension of asking about the social usefulness of what is being taught. This, of course, arises from the understandable idea that if public money is paying for education, the public need to be reassured that it will benefit from the investment it makes. Only a small fraction of Bible College provision is paid for by public funds but wherever University qualifications are offered, courses are subject to the same tests of validity.¹ The absence of public funding has the benefit of providing a degree of freedom from public control. But incurs the liability that Bible Colleges have to be funded by someone and, since students are unlikely to be able to pay realistic costs, the colleges look to the churches for support. If Bible Colleges are to reach adequate standards of education and to prove a competitive option to secular alternatives for Christian people, then they are at the moment grossly under funded and survive only because of the goodwill and dedicated commitment of their staffs. Funding, however, is not the matter I wish to concentrate on in this lecture.

I shall adopt the framework Robert Banks put forward in his book *Reenvisioning Theological Education*. Early on he refers to questions concerning goals (what they are and are we achieving them?), concerning context (how do we relate to it?), concerning ethos (are we creating the appropriate ethos?) and only latterly concerning content or curriculum (what are we teaching?). These all, as he says, may be viewed in a different way or give rise to questions of resources, governance, responsibility and formation.² But we will follow the basic agenda he has proposed.

What are our goals?

Although it is not currently as fashionable to do so as once it might have been, it seems to me that a good place to start in trying to establish our goals might be with the Bible rather than with the needs of the church or contemporary culture, as has become customary today.

i. The Old Testament

We know that there were both groups of prophets (e.g., 1 Sam 19:20; 1 Kings 18:4) and schools of the prophets, like the one in Elisha's day, referred to in 2 Kings 6:1-2. But the Bible tells us virtually nothing about what they did there and so it is of little help.³

¹ On the debate about the value of university education see Graham Cheesman, 'University Accreditation for evangelical colleges — the state of the argument, *The Theological Educator*, No 1, Journal of the European Evangelical accrediting Association, December 2005, 3-7.

² Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, p. 9.

³ See Sylvia Wilkey Collinson, *Making Disciples: The Significance of Jesus' Educational Methods for Today's Church*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004, p. 16f. She reviews educational practices in Ancient Israel more widely in pp. 14-23.

More helpful might be the indirect evidence provided by way of models of good practice among the spiritual leaders of Israel. Thus Ezra provides with a framework when in Ezra 7:10 we read, ‘... Ezra devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel’.⁴ Study, for the purposes of personal obedience and the shaping of one’s own life, and then the passing on of the fruit of study to others is perhaps the core of our work. It resonates with Paul’s injunction in 2 Tim 2:2 for Timothy to entrust the message to reliable people who will also be able to teach others.

The wisdom literature has much to teach us both about the goal of character formation and also the techniques that may be used to achieve the goal. Estes has looked at the techniques of instruction which are not always as directive as we might think on a superficial reading of Proverbs.⁵ I am thinking more widely in the wisdom literature and of an insight like that provided by Ecclesiastes 10:10 which reads: ‘If the axe is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success.’ The evangelical world is a frenetic one. No one can question the sincerity of evangelical effort to disseminate the faith and to produce more disciples. But as my former College Administrator constantly used to tell me, the key is not to work longer but to work smarter. So much energy is expended to little effect and (we might add) so many half-truths believed leading to faulty discipleship and to the detriment of growing mature disciples. Mark Noll has subjected American Evangelicalism to a rigorous critique on precisely this point. He writes, for example, that ‘the tendency of American evangelicals, when confronted with a problem, is to act. For the sake of Christian thinking, that tendency must be suppressed’.⁶ Furthermore, he warns, ‘the problem is not only to win souls but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world you will soon discover you have not won the world. Indeed, it may turn out that you have actually lost the world.’⁷ A Bible College ought to be a place where the axe is sharpened — that is, where a true understanding of the faith is taught that leads to a true maturity in Christ, and where contemporary ethics, apologetics and mission strategy are examined both in principle and in practice so that the tree of unbelief may be cut down more readily.

Malachi 3:5,6 provides yet another model in its commendation of Levi as an ideal servant of the Lord. God’s covenant with Levi, it is said, ‘called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness and turned many from sin.’ The verse encapsulates Levi’s own spiritual walk with God, his integrity and life of holiness, his ability to teach, to evangelise and to pastor and therefore implies an ability to relate well to the people he led. The 21st century AD needs, like the 4th century BC people who know God and stand reverently before him and walk obediently in the world with him, who live lives of integrity and have an

⁴ Wilkey, p. 17, argues that scribal schools probably existed which trained people like Ezra.

⁵ Philip Estes, *Hear, my son: Teaching and learning in Proverbs 1-9*, Leicester: Apollos, 1997.

⁶ Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans & Leicester, IVP, 1994, p. 243.

⁷ Noll, p. 26.

ability to win other for Christ and instruct them in the faith. All this calls for social and relational skills.

ii The New Testament

Within the New Testament we might comment on Jesus' own training of his disciples to go and evangelise, an area that has recently been explored by Sylvia Wilkey Collinson. Her research leads her to conclude that Jesus' methods included both formal and informal teaching, largely in a small group setting (although occasionally one to one) where the teaching was modelled, and where each member of the group 'makes a voluntary commitment to the other/s to form close personal relationships for an extended period of time, in order that those who ... are perceived as having superior knowledge and/or skills will attempt to cause learning to take place in the lives of others who seek their help'.⁸

I want to refer to two other passages, which I believe to be relevant. First, there is the way in which Priscilla and Aquilla took the obviously gifted Apollos to one side and with sensitivity taught him 'the way of God more adequately' (Acts 18:24-27). This may be seen as a New Testament example of the mentoring relationship between Moses and Joshua and Elijah and Elisha. It is seen supremely in Paul and Timothy, though there were probably more small group dynamics at work there than we sometimes appreciate. Paul always seemed to work in teams. Apollos reminds me of many of my students. They have some knowledge (though in terms of the Bible we cannot assume it is as great as it used to be), they are certainly passionate and have gifts and skills, as Apollos had, but they need things explaining to them more fully and channelling in a more adequate direction.

For me Colossians 1:28-29 has shaped my thinking about my personal goals. 'We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.' Admittedly, this is Paul's pastoral ambition for 'everyone', not a select few. Bible Colleges have been particularly concerned about training leaders, or those called to work in a full-time capacity, rather than everyone. But the old divisions are breaking down as we shall comment later and there is nothing wrong with applying these verses to a group within. These statements lead us to be:

- Christ focused: 'we proclaim him'. The him we proclaim has been outlined in Col 1:15-20 where we are given a mini-syllabus in theology, for you cannot speak of Christ without describing him in relation to God, creation, the church, the incarnation, reconciliation, the future and the cross. So to speak of him involves one exploring at the very least the trinity, creation and humanity, ecclesiology, Christology, soteriology, eschatology and atonement. Elsewhere Colossians is concerned not only with 'the gospel' which was received but the gospel that was experienced. Both relate to what we should be offering in theological college. To be Christ-focused is to know him and to live like him in submission and servanthood. Mind and character cannot be divorced.

- Pedagogically varied: 'warning and teaching'. Many are ignorant and need instruction, some are misguided and need correction, and a few are wilful and need

⁸ Collinson, p. 164.

rebuking. The constant emphasis in the NT is on the need to match the approach to the person so that they can profit from the instruction.⁹ As Gregory the Great graphically expressed it, ‘For the things that profit some often hurt others; seeing that also for the most part the herbs than nourish some animals are fatal to others; and the gentle hissing that quiets horses incites welps; and the medicine which abates one disease aggravates another; and the bread which invigorates the life of the strong kills little children’.¹⁰ The need to vary our pedagogy has become more urgent because of the changing educational context from which our students come, as we will mention further below. It is increasingly recognised not only that we should be about teaching students to think for themselves and work out why rather than rote learning but also that there are varied learning styles. Some learn alone from books, others from discussion with people; some learn in silence, others in noise; some learn from print and others visually; some grasp big pictures and some construct from details; some learn theoretically and then apply, other learn only by doing; to some the library is all and the internet anathema, to others the reverse is true. We cannot mass produce but, however large are numbers of classes, must aim to instruct individuals in the way they will best learn.

- Wisdom focused: ‘with all wisdom’. Christian ministry, as Eugene Peterson has reminded us, is *sapientia* not *scientia*.¹¹ In the foolish world in which we live teaching wisdom and teaching wisely are essential. The head stuffed full of knowledge but which is unable to apply it in the ordinariness of life is not much use. My own vision of theological education is not that we continue to pour out a mass of products from our PhD factories but that our products are both academically competent and spiritually, socially and relationally wise, as outlined in Proverbs. Too many of our graduates know a lot but do not have the wisdom to teach it, to live it or to relate to the lives of ordinary people who are, on the whole, much more concerned about how they’re going to pay their mortgage or the quality of their kids’ schooling than they are about superlapsarianism and the economic trinity.

- Perfection aimed. The picture of perfection is of a skilled master of the trade as opposed to the apprentice. Perfection is not perhaps so much absolute freedom from sin and being an accomplished disciple (and in the case of the Bible College, an accomplished leader) at ease with Christ both in belief and behaviour. It is about the transformation of the character as Colossians 3 onwards describes. It is about the transforming work of the Holy Spirit though Paul doesn’t mention him explicitly here.

So I want to train Christ-centred, mature disciples who are wise in their living and mature in their use of knowledge, skills and calling.

You will notice that I have not talked in terms of equipping for mission or training for youth work. These are applications of the more general goals that the Bible sets before us and they may be highly determined by the context in which we live. I

⁹ 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim. 2:14; Jude 22,23

¹⁰ Gregory the Great, *Book of Pastoral Rule*, III Prologue, NP-NF, XII, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 24, cited in Derek Tidball, *Skilful Shepherds: Explorations in Pastoral Theology*, Apollos, 1996, p. 157f.

¹¹ Eugene Peterson has an interesting discussion on this point in Marva Dawn and Eugene Peterson, *The Unnecessary Pastor*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2000, pp. 132-137.

believe it is dangerous not to reflect on the general goals before coming to more specific vocational outcomes since it would be too easy to degenerate *via* that route to mere human pragmatism or cultural expediency. Our goals must be about the training of the person first, and only for the task, important though that is, subsequently.

What of the context?

If the goal has not changed, the context has. Among the changes in the context that we face are these:

- In the western world, the rapid rise of pluralism and the decline of belief bringing an end of Christendom and the onset of a secular mindset. The church has had to reengineer to a missionary, as opposed to a pastoral mode.¹²

- In the cultural world, the progress, at least for the moment, of postmodernity with its uncertainty regarding truth and objective knowledge, its dethroning of metanarratives and universal answers and ethics, its ambiguity about all boundaries, its pessimism about the future, its questioning of established authorities and its rediscovery of the personal and spiritual dimensions of life.¹³ Postmodernity may only be a temporary phase but it is making inroads, not least because the omni-presence of the media who are much more in love with it than many. Claiming to preach nothing it in fact preaches everything.

- In the educational world, the commodification of education whereby knowledge has become a product where everything has to be measured, league-tables, managed and profitable.¹⁴ Classic education being no longer profitable in the market place is giving way to applied education where the necessary aptitudes for employment are available.

- In the global world, the rise of fundamentalism and the resulting kickback which causes many to react negatively and fearfully to any religion conviction and work for a secular world dominated by humanity rather than gods. This debate is extremely current and rapidly moving.

It is not possible to explore the implications of all of these in depth but let me pick up two features of our changing context: the religious and the educational:

Religiously (in very general terms) the implications are that Colleges must adapt from:

	Old Pattern	New Pattern
Context	Christendom	Missional
Assumptions	Bible knowledge	Little knowledge
Spiritual disciplines	Formed	Unformed

¹² There is a vast literature debating the finer points of this claim. Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain, Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, London: Routledge, 2001 provides a starting point.

¹³ Two good starting points on postmodernity are found in Stanley Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996 and David Lyon, *Postmodernity*, Buckingham, OUP, 1994.

¹⁴ For an enjoyable book in this area on a wider front see George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, London: Pine Forge Press, 1996.

Needs	Educational	Pastoral
Christian faith	Explained	Defended (apologetically & ethically)

Most colleges today welcome passionate students who are very committed to Christ and creative in the way in which they wish to serve him. But many lack basic knowledge and spiritual formation and we have to be much more intentional about this than in previous generations and try to channel the passion into the rivers of Biblical truth and doctrine from which they are often far removed.

A weakness of some colleges is that they still live and function within the cosy paradigm of Christendom, or rather, to be more precise, within a cosy Evangelical subculture. They exist to serve the churches that are and relate well to the huge but diminishing network of supporters that we have traditionally served. As a principal I am well aware of the need to communicate well with our support base. But that base is ageing and the decline of it is rapid. It has tended to live in a somewhat introverted world. As never before we must ask the question posed by Robert Banks not only about our context but also to what extent we are in touch with it. We need to be training leaders who can serve effectively in emerging churches, among urban deserts, in the metropolises where Islam reigns and terrorism is a very present reality and in an increasingly politically correct world that is intolerant of religious expression.

The educational changes have implications for the way we teach in Bible Colleges and affect us at least along the following lines:

	Old pattern	New pattern
Package	Amateur	Quality
Teacher	Authority	Midwife/mentor
Delivery	Lecture	Interactive
Philosophy	Theory>practice	Reflective practice
Agenda	Academic	Vocational
Focus	Literature	People, culture, IT
Market	Professional	Lay
Mode	Full-time/ Community based	Flexible/ non-residential
Approach	Segmented	Synthetic
Content	Assumed	Basic
Learning	Individual	Team/relational
Teaching	Mass	Niche

Rather than exploring each of these dimensions in depth, let me make a few comments.

First, it is no good trying to pretend the situation is other than it is. Students come formed by a very different educational experience than once they had and we need to work with them as they are rather than complain they are not what we would like them to be. Many of the above educational changes are, in my view, positive. The widening of access to university education and the opportunities presented to Bible Colleges to participate in the wider system of Higher Education are overwhelmingly advantageous, since in many cases it leads to a better quality of education being offered. More public scrutiny of what we teach in terms of accreditation processes,

the need for an adequate resource base in terms of library and IT, the imposition of double marking, and the need to gain regular, honest student feedback about our teaching are all worthwhile. Furthermore, unlike the classic universities of the past, many universities have an understanding of vocational training and may enable us to overcome the academic/vocational, or even academic/spiritual divide of the past. Spiritual formation modules and skill development modules may now be structured into degree programmes and assessed along with a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew as never before. Such is a positive benefit from pluralism.

A second comment relates to teaching method. The church, particularly the evangelical church, tends to be more didactic in its approach than other institutions today. The reasons for this are complex and include theological issues, such as our view of truth and orthodoxy, and historical traditions, such as the role of the preacher. But honesty compels us to admit that the educational methods employed in the Bible were often less directive and informal as both Estes and Collinson have recently underlined. Estes, for example, commenting on Proverbs 1-9 writes, ‘Rather than demanding compliance based solely on the authority of the teacher, wisdom frequently directs by indirection ... The teacher places concrete observations from life before the learner, challenging the learner to infer the principle which they teach. Melchert ... concludes, “Pedagogically, the practice suggests that the listener or reader be an active participant or an interpreter, and not just a passive recipient of another’s wisdom. The listener can help create the wisdom.”’¹⁵

So much for the changing context.

What is our ethos?

Four words capture what I believe should characterize the ethos of a Bible College. They are: intentional, holistic, outward looking and integrative.

First, we should be intentional. Learning doesn’t just happen. Indeed, as any school teacher knows there needs to be intentionality on the part of the teacher if the pupils are to learn, otherwise the class hours can slip away like sand through the fingers, and the pupils leave still uninstructed. The motivation of our students is altogether different from the average teenager in Year 9, or indeed the average university students. But there are still issues to be faced by us in this regard. The whole of the college experience needs to be an intentional learning opportunity, not just the classroom hours. Students should be discouraged from being consumers, picking and choosing what they believe they will need and ignoring elements that are more demanding or less appealing. Looking back many a graduate has confessed that they wished they had taken more notice of this or that subject because they were unaware at the time of how valuable it would subsequently prove. How glad we are that medical students are taught a range of medical disciplines and not allowed to be myopic too soon. The intentionality of the learning contract we have with students should relate to much more than the acquisition of academic knowledge but to growth in discipleship and character as well. I tell my students, especially the younger ones, that I shall relate to them not as a typical British university student but as a potential Christian leader in training. Sadly, it is still not unknown to have students who are

¹⁵ Estes, p. 103.

brilliant academically or who have wonderful vocational skills but lack the character to go with it. These go out and prove to be liabilities rather than assets in future church leadership.

Secondly it should be holistic. Here I want simply to explore a little further the point made in the previous paragraph. A Bible College needs to educate the whole student and not just the student as a mind, or as a future activist. Academic instruction needs to go along with spiritual formation, skill development and personal growth. Any one dimension without the others is a distorted education that leads to malformed graduates ill-equipped to cope with the demands that will be placed on them. Theological education inevitably is trying to satisfy a number of different audiences — the academy, the church, the world and the student him or herself. Bible Colleges vary and vary as to which of these audiences assume the priority on the list of those they are trying to please. For some, especially those ministerial training schools that have been part of the university world for some time, the academy may assume too great an importance at the expense of the needs of others. Studies in the United States of America demonstrate the different order in which priorities will be placed according to who is responding to the question. Academics place theological knowledge top of the list, pastors put relational and management skills in number one place, while students stress spirituality and relationships.¹⁶ The truth is all are needed and need to be blended.

Perhaps one limiting factor should be mentioned. Colleges need to be clear that their calling relates to education and training. With students carrying increasing emotional baggage from the past and arriving with a host of personal problems, there is a false expectation on the part of some that they are joining a therapeutic community rather than a school or a college. The college needs to be a caring environment, providing a certain level of pastoral support and an environment where people can test things out without the fear of failure. But it is not a hospital and holistic means exactly that, holistic, and should not be distorted by becoming essentially a centre for personal healing any more than it should concern itself primarily with academic knowledge.

Thirdly, it should be outward-looking. The college that simply caters for the internal evangelical constituency and does not show an awareness of the world and the need to equip people to serve Christ among the postmodern sceptics, the socially marginalised, the lands divided by terrorism, the desperately poor and the victims of AIDS, is out of touch with the world in which we live. Of course it is impossible to address every single issue that single-issue groups would like to put on our agenda — and believe me they try to get them on our agenda — but our focus and training should be such that we provide them with foundations, tools, skills, perspectives and principles which can be applied and reapplied in all sorts of places across the globe and that can be constantly reapplied as time goes by.

Fourthly, it should be integrative. The various elements cannot exist alongside each other but never touch. The old divisions of academia where the Old Testament scholars refuse to teach the Christological implications of a certain passage because

¹⁶ Timothy Morgan, 'Reengineering the Seminary' *Christianity Today*, 24 October 1994, p. 75.

that's New Testament should be buried forever. The New Testament specialist should move beyond the concerns of the guild of New Testament scholars and apply their work to the concerns of the church and leave the student with a clear impression of how this living word of God can be preached. The practitioner should not be divorced from the Bible and theology when it comes to the contemporary skills required to manage, counsel or communicate. The contemporary church has too long not thought biblically enough in these areas but adopted secular wisdom and baptised them by sprinkling a few Bible verses around rather than immersing herself in Scriptural wisdom. Chapel, different medium of worship though it is, should reflect what's going on in the classroom, not be the place where for an hour a week, or whatever, one doesn't need to think but emotions dominate! Vocational placements should raise the questions and partly set the agenda that are then addressed elsewhere in the curriculum. I was challenged recently by James Plueddemann's questions in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 'Do the educational activities reinforce each other? Is there a consistency between classroom activities, practical service and the implicit curriculum of campus life? What could be done to make parts of the holistic educational experience strength each other.'¹⁷ Integration does not just happen; it needs to be intentional. Team teaching or integrative modules may be helpful in this regard but they are secondary to an agreed vision and a conscious attempt to cross-reference in each class. Few of our graduates will have the luxury of being specialists, so we should not model an approach that is going to prove impossible for them to imitate.

What are we teaching?

Only after considering the above should we determine the content of our curriculum. Different colleges will have particular remits that shape the agenda. But from what has been said so far a few comments may be made about the actual curriculum.

First, a balance needs to be struck between the theoretical and the practical. The most academic of colleges must include the applied and the most practical of colleges must include the theoretical. If we fail to go on teaching the 'pure' subjects — in our area that means Bible history, content, theology and languages, doctrine and history and so on — we shall be serving the future church poorly. Alistair MacIntyre in *After Virtue* begins by positing a frightening scenario where people try to make sense of science after all the world's natural scientists have been done away with and the store of scientific knowledge has been mostly lost and the fragments that remain have been chaotically disordered. People would succeed in piecing something together but whether it would be well founded is another question. We would, he says, 'have lost our comprehension'.¹⁸ So it would be if our theological and Bible College education were allowed to become merely pragmatic training.¹⁹

¹⁷ James E Plueddemann, 'The Future of Evangelical Theological Education', *ERT* 14.1 (1990) 22.

¹⁸ Alistair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Duckworth, 1985, p. 2.

¹⁹ This is somewhat in contention with David Heywood, 'A New Paradigm for Theological Education', *Anvil*, 17.1 (2000) 19-27.

Yet, the schooling model, as Collinson calls it, is not adequate on its own and is better at producing theological researchers than active disciples.²⁰ Unless we are intent on just producing biblical and theological scholars who will fit with the academy learning informally, through modelling, on placements, by reflective practice will all be essential. Not all current theological teachers are well equipped to provide such teaching. The balance must be struck.

Secondly, our curricula must adjust to the growing level of biblical illiteracy and theological ignorance with which students come, often because they have been fed on a diet of therapeutic pap in their churches. Consequently our syllabuses must contain more foundational material, more introductory courses and not assume knowledge that does not exist.

Thirdly, space should be made for spiritual formation and personal growth. This must occur intentionally rather than being an unintentional by-product of the system. Formation modules can be built into the curricula and objectively assessed, even peer group assessed, just as professional practice modules are built into the training of counsellors or social workers. They need not be ‘added on’ subjects that play second fiddle to the academic. A major component should be learning to work with others and ‘education away from’ competition, individualism and personal ambition.²¹ They will, of course, have little effect unless the students see the same things modelled by the tutors.

Fourthly, the curriculum should deal with the issues of interface thrown up by our modern world and within that a major element will be the attention given to mission, even if Robert Banks’ model is not wholly adopted.²² In some quarters there is a move to reduce training to the acquisition of management or even marketing techniques in the name of mission. This will prove disastrous and will quickly produce heresy. Banks is wisely aware of such a danger and knows ‘the importance of learning the tradition — biblical, historical and theological’ but pleads that it be taught in a life-oriented way.

Few would disagree with such aspirations and, indeed, many would plead that that is what we are already doing. But the evidence is that many have not truly understood the more radical changes that are required if we are to deliver adequately such an agenda.²³

In 1983, the International Council of Accrediting Agencies for evangelical theological education produced a *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education*. They listed twelve values that should characterise our work from which none would dissent but to which we should continue to aspire. They were: cultural appropriateness; attentiveness to the Christian community being served; flexible strategising; theological grounding; outcomes assessment; spiritual formation in nurturing educational communities; holistic curricularising of spiritual, practical and

²⁰ Collinson, p. 228 & p. 233.

²¹ Collinson, p. 234.

²² Banks, pp. 142-240.

²³ Robert Ferris, ‘Renewal of Theological Education: Commitments, models and the ICAA *Manifesto*’, *ERT*, 14.1 (1990), 64-75.

academic aims; orientation to servant leadership; creativity in teaching; a Christian world view; a lifelong developmental focus and a cooperative spirit.²⁴

²⁴ The *Manifesto* can be found in Robert Ferris, *Renewal in Theological Education: Strategies for Change*, Wheaton: Wheaton College, 1990. The summary is taken from Collinson, p. 227.