

Seedbed XI

(= God won over us) when something bad happens? Why not take the bull by the horns next time your friend says a like expression and suggest that you look together into the Book that speaks about the origin of destiny and shows which part God plays in this and which part man is responsible for. The first three chapters of the Bible are ideal starters and I have used Genesis 1–3 for the most diverse life situations — when someone has doubts about purpose in life, when women seek their identity, when couples consider marriage, when people use astrology, etc. When people struggle with evil in whatever form, these chapters not only show why we struggle with it, but give hope. A study of this passage usually leads to more Bible studies. Last but not least, Gen. 1–3 is a necessary foundation for understanding the Gospel.

The material is presented in four lessons, presently available in English and Tunisian Arabic. Since it was originally written with women in mind who are not used to inductive Bible studies, every point to be made is carefully set out as a question (with expected answer), so that people can discover for themselves what the Bible says. By the way, this is a trial edition and your comments are welcome!

[Copies of the above study can be obtained from the *Seedbed* editor. The material of the study is also being incorporated into a more extensive study on the whole of Genesis in Modern Standard Arabic which we hope will be available soon. Ed.]

TRAINING MATERIALS

Theological Training In The Arab World

by R.M.

“What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Paul's methodology in permeating the known world with the Gospel was not primarily by (a) doing the work himself, nor by (b) training workers, e.g. Timothy, to do the work in his place. It could better be described as training faithful workers to train faithful workers to train faithful workers to train faithful workers, . . .

In the same line of thinking, the optimal and most effective investment of time and effort, personnel and means, is not primarily or predominantly to “do” the work of gospel propagation ourselves, but rather to model, train, equip, and encourage the brethren (in the sense of the two sexes) to go and do the same.

This is the goal of the *Program for Theological Education by Extension (PTEE)*, based in Amman, Jordan. This is the reason I'm investing my capital in this venture. I firmly believe it pays off!

The *PTEE* was founded in 1981 as a collaboration of different evangelical church groups in the Middle East, together with a number of foreign agencies and individuals. The goal was to bring quality theological education and ministry training to the students instead of bringing

students to the education as is the traditional mode of educational institutions. Concurrently the emphasis in both teaching and administering of courses was put on training under existing church leadership in the context of the local church. The resulting pattern demonstrates maximum flexibility under the diverse circumstances of the church in the Arab world.

The student remains in his social and ministry context, and maintains his financial independence. Apart from the costs of course material (usually photocopied), the student has practically no expenses; hence the courses are accessible for nearly anyone throughout the spectrum of economic strata. Since the beginnings of *PTEE* we've had well over a thousand students complete at least one course. Many of these have gone on to profit from several courses; some taking every course we have available. In the last academic year, for example, in Egypt over 350 students completed courses, in Jordan over 85; further students are studying in Lebanon and Iraq. This does not include students in the Sudan, North Africa, the Arabian Gulf, as well as a number of courses in Arabic fellowships scattered from Vancouver to Sydney, with Montreal and Amsterdam in-between.

And we don't have all the statistics, as impressive as the above may be. *PTEE* courses are not correspondence courses, sent to and supervised from some central location which can keep close records. They are self-propagating and self-multiplying courses under the leadership of local churches, most of which are only minimally concerned with our centralized record keeping. There is, therefore, good reason to believe that the overall effect of *PTEE* generously outstrips any recorded statistics.

How does it happen? The courses in each country are (more or less) supervised by a consortium from different evangelical churches called the "National Committee." Courses are offered on a twelve-week semester basis under the supervision of experienced and recognized national church leaders. Our experience has been that the courses are often attended by believers from different denominations and localities. The consequent interaction results in mutual enrichment and understanding of the diverse facets of the church of Jesus Christ, as well as a few intriguing sparks.

The student is expected to study on his own for some 6 to 8 hours before the weekly tutorial session, which may last up to three hours. A short exam is given at the beginning of each class and a major final exam on all the material of the course at the end of the semester. Depending on the subject matter either research projects or practical ministry is required as part of each course. These dynamic group tutorial sessions offer fertile training and modeling opportunities, along with the stress and strains of opinion building and theological repositioning. The challenge for the tutor in these sessions is to "practice what we preach", i.e. to "be" not just to "create".

The overall proposed curriculum consists of 34 courses, representing the following major subdivisions:

- (1) *The Christian and his spiritual life*
- (2) *The Christian and his Bible*
- (3) *The Christian and his ministry skills*
- (4) *The Christian and his society*

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At present approximately two thirds of these courses are available and in use. We've set ourselves the goal of completing the full curriculum by the year 2000, which means production and testing of roughly four courses per year.

It is for this purpose that we have established the administrative office, along with staff and installation, in Amman. Where feasible courses are based on existing TEE material from around the world, avoiding the proverbial reinvention of the wheel so innate to our profession. The majority of these courses originate from India, Pakistan and the Philippines. On particularly sensitive cultural issues, e.g. marriage and family, pastoral care and church planting, we emphasize both original authorship and national character. To this end we plan and participate in writers' workshops and the coordination of Christian literature production throughout the Arab World.

The successful completion of the 34 courses will lead to an accredited B.A. in Theology. The PTEE is a member of both the *Asian Theological Association (ATA)* and the *Middle East Association for Theological Education (MEATE)*, as well as being an associate member of the *International Council of Accrediting Agencies (ICAA)* of the *World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF)*. Now, how's that for organizational alphabet soup! The point is that we are connected with a credible international training network.

In conclusion, what would we like of you, the readers of *SEEDBED*? In short: prayer and support. We ask you to pray seriously for the all training of church leaders throughout the Arab World, whether using our material or not. We invite you to give generously and regularly to our efforts in quality course production. The cost/student ratio of PTEE indicates wise investment. I believe your dividends will prove abundant!

You know where to address your prayers. As for support, send your gift to any AWM office, earmarked **PTEE Textbook Project**.

WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

1. Two information items available from AMC, c/o KFS Consultants Ltd. PO Box 7186 Lykavitos CY1642 NICOSIA Cyprus:

A Comprehensive Listing Of Christian Arabic Radio Programmes, US\$4 / GBP25 + US\$2 postage & packing + US\$5 if paying by cheque. This booklet lists all Arabic programmes available each day with name of programme, name of producer, time and frequency. About fifty programmes are listed for each day from 1:00 A.M. to 22:30 P.M. The first section lists programmes according to programme name. The second lists programmes according to producer's name. Two short sections follow. The first gives a "footprint" of who broadcasts via what stations, what frequencies different stations use, and what area of the world they cover. The second gives addresses, phone and fax numbers for the different producers listed. While too bulky to use as a handout, the booklet is a valuable resource tool for Christian workers among Arabic-speaking peoples.