Designing the Islamic Component of a Proposed World Religion Curriculum for South African State Schools

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An aspect of curriculum policy-making under the past Nationalist government had to do with policy being used to develop and impose the state's nationalist and religious ideology—Christian National Education—on all schools in South Africa after its assumption of power in 1948. One consequence of this policy was that the rich diversity of South Africans as a people holding to multiple, positive, and idiosyncratic beliefs linked to various communal identities was sacrificed to a state-imposed pseudo-commonality. Part of the challenge of educational reconstruction under the democratic government elected in April 1994 is to develop curricula that both recognize the diversity of positive ideals, beliefs, and faith while remaining impartial, if not agnostic,[1] toward any one belief and to contribute to the development of a new and shared national identity.

Following ministerial approval, an "Accommodation Model" for teaching religion has been announced recently. In it, schools are allowed to choose between teaching "one . . . faith" as an academic curriculum, a "world religion" curriculum, or a "combination" of the two, as religious education in the core curriculum and/or as an academic subject leading to certification.[2] We suggest that the impetus for a world religion curriculum has to do with a desire to develop in all students an understanding of the diversity of faiths in the country and to move away from the solely Bible-centered programs of the past. In this article, we consider the design of the Islamic component for inclusion as one component in the proposed world religion curriculum. Its purposes are considered against the backdrop of

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other values-based curricula in the country and Islam as a faith in southern and South Africa, which is followed by a critique of mainstream Islamic curricula, discussion of the design, and comment upon it.

Curriculum and Positive Ideal Curricula

In his recent review of conceptions of curriculum, Jackson reminds us that curriculum can be seen to refer to both "directed experience" and "undirected experience."[3] He reminds us that student learning in schools encompasses both what is selected formally for inclusion within a curriculum and taught in classrooms and beliefs learned, for the most part tacitly (in school, from peers, at home) and that comprise an individually constructed biography of meanings built up over time that governs the way the student sees experience in daily life. This expands the commonly accepted notion of curriculum by including learning that is idiosyncratic to individual students and to groups of persons within a school.

Expanding on Jackson, an "undirected experience" curriculum includes a vast range of recipe knowledge referring to learning that is planned deliberately and internalized tacitly, such as learning from one's parents and extended family (values, attitudes, and routines), religious institutions (predispositions to good and evil), and the media (advertisements teach people to want, documentaries inform, and soap operas reinforce common myths).[4] Conceiving curriculum in this way makes the point that learning positive beliefs involves both learning about an ideal or a system of beliefs as provided for in the formally constructed and taught component of a school curriculum and following rules learned tacitly that pattern daily life and govern action to make it predictable within a given range.

The distinction between learning "about" and learning as "engaging in activities" is useful for understanding the Islamic component of the multifaith curriculum in question. While the major task of non-Muslim students is likely to be to "learn about" the precepts of Islam as a content, the major task of Muslim students is likely to be to engage with central concepts of Islam from "within" as a personal lived expression of their faith in daily life. This distinction is also central to the design of the curriculum and differentiates it from the predominantly content orientation of both the present widely implemented Bible-centered state curricula and traditional Islamic curricula in private Islamic schools and *madaris*.

By and large, directed experience curricula, or formally planned programs of instruction, advocating positive ideals are integral to state schooling. They indicate to students both the salient content for learning and the accepted formalizations as indicators of learning. Examples of current curricula advocating positive values in state schools include traditionally designed religious education programs (Religious Education, Bible Education, Religious Instruction, Right Living, and Cultural Studies) and

studies in religion, such as Biblical Studies, which features a curriculum designed for Bible study as an academic subject.[5] Curricula in private denominational schools and religious schools are more varied in design and include campus crusades; formal worship; catechism classes; Jewish studies, a national consciousness-building program developed in Jewish schools;[6] and *madari*s or Qur'an schools.

Other curricula developed by organizations outside the sphere of formal education vary considerably and include those planned and implemented by organized Christian, Jewish, and Muslim youth groups. Examples are the curricula of the Student Christian Association and Scripture Union, the Student Jewish Association, and various curricula organized in the Muslim community. These consist of, but are not limited to, programs for students in their late teens organized by the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa, programs of the Al-Fajr LEAD Centre for infants and younger Muslim children, youth leadership programs for Muslim youths between 6 and 14 years old, and the Muslim Students Association of South Africa, which is present on university campuses throughout the country.[7]

Curricula organized by secular youth organizations include activity-based designs, such as the service and experientally-oriented courses of Outward Bound International and its derivatives (Veld and Vlei, South Africa; Outward Bound Lesotho; the International Colleges in Mbabane, Swaziland), and the curricula of the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, and PROTEC. Many of these programs are noted for their innovative designs, but few aim explicitly to incorporate within their curricula the type of learning that takes place both in and out of school to both transmit knowledge content and revivify personal beliefs through the curriculum.

Many of these youth programs have embraced positive ideals over several decades and indirectly have addressed the question of social difference as diversity rather then as a deficit in the wider community. Likewise, the cluster of Muslim programs particularly reflects international concern for and contests about its particular ideals and beliefs. These programs express a felt need for recognition of a Muslim identity as one among others and as an expression of their contribution to wider community ideals and values within a local and international context in which they perceive fundamental values to be in decline. Accordingly, the Muslim community's present concern is to transmit Islamic ideals as one faith within the country to students of other faiths and to revivify its ideals for Islamic students in a world religion state program. The Muslim community sees this as in keeping with the wider realization in the present climate of fundamental social change. In addition, it recognizes that difference is one aspect of developing new social relations of desegregation[8] and that there is a need for accommodating distinct ideals—in this instance Islamic ideals—in the construction of a new national identity.

Small as their numbers might be in both southern and South Africa, Muslims are likely to have a significant impact on the design of the proposed world religion program. While it is estimated that one-fifth of the world's population can be considered Muslim and that Islam is the second most populous religion in France as of 1993, the numerical strength of Muslims in southern Africa is somewhat different. In South Africa they represent 2 percent of a total population of 43 million,[9] while in Botswana they form .3 percent out of 1.8 million people. Muslims form a tiny community of 50,000 out of 10 million Zimbabweans, and in Swaziland Islam has failed to attract large numbers of followers.[10]

Even though their numbers are small in South Africa, during the 1980s Islam began to attract an increasing number of Africans. The impetus for this was visits of internationally recognized Islamic scholars to South Africa in the early 1970s, the growth and influence of spiritual and reform movements like the Tablīghi Jamāʻat, and by the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran. Interest has been renewed in Islam as a result of the Gulf war and the Palestinian uprising (intifadah), as well as by such cult figures as Muhammad Ali visiting South Africa and the screening of such films as "Roots" and "Malcolm X." During this period, young Muslims in particular became more organized and coordinated in their activities with a view to developing Islam as a regional force possessing a distinctive African Islamic identity in the postapartheid era.[11] Including Islamic values—such as God-consciousness (*taqwā*), revering the prophets, enacting faith through prayer and prohibitions (for example, a stand against substance abuse), and a developed sense of economic charity for the betterment of the community—in this curriculum presents an opportunity that this community is unlikely to forego.

Given curriculum proposals proposed in the new policy documents published by the state,[12] the community,[13] and such political parties as the African National Congress,[14] there is a feeling that Muslims may well contribute to the curriculum development in ways that do not conflict with the principles underlying the democratic process in education and reflected variously in these documents. Indeed, it is likely that guidelines for the development of educational policies and curricula under the democratically elected government of President Mandela are less likely to emanate from norms and standards established by a central government and a ministry of education than from strong regional or provincial governments, where the development of educational policies and curricula will be guided with reference to principles enshrined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.[15]

Muslim Alliances, Fractures, and Tensions

It must be pointed out that the Muslim community in South Africa is not a monolithic whole. Internal fractures reflect similar race, class, and ethnic cleavages seen in South Africa as a whole. There are Muslims who

look to scholars in India, Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia for leadership and guidance; those who identify with Indian or, alternatively, Malay and Javanese culture; and a growing group of new African converts. Politically, two broad groups within the Muslim community can be identified. The traditionalist group comprises the largest organized group, controls the learning and teaching of Islam, and represents the majority of the country's religious leaders. This group includes members of the Muslim Judicial Council in the Cape and the Jami'at ul Ulama in the Transvaal and Natal. Some of their leaders and supporters are merchants, propertied and locked into the economy, who vote for parties that rank security high on their election promises, while others declare openly their support for the liberation movement and the African National Congress. In contrast, progressive Islamic forces like the Muslim Youth Movement and the Call of Islam have chosen an activist role for Islam and have become involved in national politics. Not infrequently their members have furthered their studies locally and at foreign universities and then exerted their increased degree of influence via their advisory role to the Jami'ats.[16] They differ from traditionalists in their attitude to Islam in that they seek a wider role for their belief by using the Qur'an to understand the ever-changing world in which they live.[17]

Furthermore, sections of the Muslim community are fearful of the possible changes in the new South Africa. There is a growing feeling, in view of the Bosnian, Palestinian, and Somali experiences, that the Islamic faith is under attack everywhere. As a people, Muslims fear for their personal safety, their children's education, the sanctity of the mosque, and the possibility that they might not be able to practice their religion openly in a new South Africa. Part of this fear can be seen in a growing jihad movement that promotes self-defence and reflects the struggle of Muslims universally for positive change and resistance to oppression.

On the other hand, both secular and religious Muslims are organizing themselves into political parties in order to participate in the democratic process: the Islamic Party has registered in the Western Cape, and the Africa Muslim Party, with support in the Pretoria-Witswatersrand-Bereenining complex (now Gauteng), has registered in the Western Cape and Natal. Muslim representation in the liberation movement is also significant: 20 of 200 ANC candidates who stood for election to the National Assembly in the April 1994 election were drawn from the Muslim community.

Under the apartheid regime, only limited opportunities in education were open to the Muslim community (and others) to communicate their ideals, as it was difficult, if not actually illegal, for persons of one race to impact on the curricula of another. One result of this policy in the Muslim community has been the use of education to preserve an "Islamic identity" and "create a counter-culture" for Muslim youth through the ongoing development of Islamic schools.[18] Furthermore, as the Muslim community believes that its children are growing up in a world where fundamental values are in decay, Islamic schools are con-

sidered crucial elements in moral development. The number of private Islamic schools has grown to 25 in the last decade, and *madaris*, which most primary-school Muslim students attend after state school hours for instruction in Islam, continue to be established throughout the country.[19] It also seems, in the present climate of educational reform, that Muslim schools play a role in bridging differences within the Muslim community.

The Program: Islam as a Discipline

The Islamic component of the proposed world religion curriculum grew out of two initiatives in education that took place after the ANC was unbanned in 1990. The first emanated from Muslim parents and workers in Lenasia, Johannesburg, and the second from the state as a national curriculum reform initiative. In the first initiative, Muslim parents and workers of the Al-Fajr LEAD Centre, after voicing their concern over student disaffection with mainstream Islamic curricula, sought to reconceive these curricula to revivify student interest in the faith. The second grew out of the deliberations of representatives of the various religions in South Africa under the umbrella of the National Education and Training Forum Syllabus Revision Project. This project was coordinated by Suzanne Rees and, working in conjunction with the new Department of Education, sought to change the Bible-centered religion curricula in state schools in 1995. The forum recommended the adoption of an "accommodation model" that would empower school communities to select the religion curricula that they wished to implement and, more specifically, allowed a "world religion" curriculum as an alternative to the "single faith" option. The former curriculum is of particular interest to us, for it presents an opportunity for other faiths (previously excluded from this process) and the state to redesign religion curricula to include Christianity and other faiths as components of the state curriculum. This has led to the Al-Fajr Education Foundation's production of a working document that outlines the Islamic component of the world religion curriculum.

The Islamic component of this proposed curriculum represents an attempt to counter two trends among students: student ignorance about the Islamic faith as a world religion in general, and the trend among Muslim youth toward disaffection with learning about Islam and the consequent drift from Islamic values toward other ethics in particular. Both trends, it is believed, result at least in part from deficient traditional models of Islamic education.

Critics of mainstream Islamic curricula argue that these curricula are content-dependent, emphasize a transmission model of teaching and learning and, more recently, provide too limited a view of Islam and fail to connect students with Islam as a living faith. It is claimed that insufficient emphasis has been given in these traditionally designed curricula for students to engage actively with the concepts of their faith.

Critics also suggest that these programs trivialize the faith, reduce it as a living faith to knowledge-content for recollection and, more important-ly, fail to encourage students to internalize Islamic values and, by default, engender within them a passivity toward Islam and a sense of boredom with it as a school subject.[20] In addition, parents and teachers argue that a curriculum based on ideas of content explicitness, efficient transmission, and student pliability,[21] while providing knowledge-content integral to a program, provide too limited a view of design and the learning process. Mainstream designs, they argue, require a complement to content as an organizing principle and suggest that this can be found in "activity-based" designs that initiate students into the activities of a discipline through the curriculum. Students, in this view of curriculum, are impelled into the log-ically organized thought processes that structure Islam as a discipline—its logical form—and that, at the same time, differentiates Islam from other faiths.

In essence, this curriculum emphasizes both learning about Islam and engaging with the activities of the faith (its concepts and principles) from the inside. Stated more broadly, the problem here is not unique to this par-ticular curriculum for, as Stenhouse reminds us, it represents the funda-mental task of curriculum design to find ways to attain a better "mesh" between learners and what is to be learned in a curriculum.[22]

Islam as "Initiating into Activities": Purpose, Content, and Pedagogy

The Islamic curriculum can be considered innovative, for it targets both Muslim and non-Muslim students. In part, the curriculum is a direct-ed experience program in which Islamic concepts, rituals, and principles are organized for students of other faiths to learn about Islam. However, it is also an undirected experience program dependent upon Muslim students recognizing that they bring prior learning about Islam into classrooms to reflect on their beliefs and actions as Muslims. Thus the curriculum seeks to convey content and to initiate students into the activities of their faith.

The design of this curriculum is not without precedent. Extensive work has been done on designs that both inform and impel into activities. Redesigning the curriculum at Stantonbury School in the United Kingdom involved experimenting with time and its use in classes and experimenting with student–staff relations to negotiate a curriculum for individual stu-dents as a "contract" between student and teacher.[23] Elaborating upon this idea, Breen views the contract as being between the teacher and students in general.[24] Stein and Janks conceive of it as pertaining particularly in class-rooms where no fixed content needs to be covered.[25] Boomet et al. see negotiation between students and teachers at the heart of this process, with the understanding that this is always embedded in sociopolitical contexts that constrain what is possible.[26] Bokaba conceives of curriculum as con-

tract to apply (only) within a context where democratic values can flourish, where teachers have voluminous room to maneuvre, and where students' participation and creativity is encouraged.[27] A second emphasis in activity-based designs has to do with integrating subject disciplines to develop students' competency in communication, promoting interdisciplinary understanding of a theme, and understanding across such divides as age and language.[28] A third emphasis in activity-based designs is seen in process curricula, such as Breakthrough-to-Literacy, in which teaching commences with daily student experience and allows freedom for students to acquire skills at their own pace under teacher supervision.[29] Stenhouse opines that learning through activities has an internal connection between the learner and what is to be learned.[30] The Humanities Curriculum Project, in which he played a definitive role, emphasizes materials, initiating students into disciplined activities, and students experiencing a measure of power in and control over learning to round out and deepen understanding individually with teachers.

Drawing on this experience, Islamic workers were persuaded of the need for an activity design. In essence, the curriculum is materials driven (providing content), entails negotiating a contract with each student to guide personal growth and increased toleration, provides space and time in classrooms for student interaction, views teachers as colearners with students, encourages the development of strong personal relationships with students, and engenders in students a seriousness and commitment to learning as a disciplined activity.

The curriculum, thus, makes a clear break from those assumptions that were implicit in mainstream Islamic programs and linked to directed experience designs. Its premises include adequate materials, initiating students into the activities of a discipline, and student-centeredness. These contrast with such premises in mainstream designs as content prespecification, teacher-talk linked to content transmission, and matching curriculum inputs with student outcomes.

In keeping with activity-based designs, the Islamic curriculum poses a set of questions to students that they should address in relation to their faith: What are the central concepts of Islam and how does this faith differ from others in general and from my faith in particular? How can I better recognize and live Islamic precepts in daily life? How do these precepts differ from the precepts of other faiths?

As a curriculum, the innovation contains elements of an undirected experience program. It assumes, following Stenhouse, that students reflect upon and engage in the activities of a discipline to make internal connections between the learner and a discipline—between a (non-Muslim) student's personal faith and what is to be learned, and between a (Muslim) student's recognition of Islamic precepts operative in his/her experience and the developed precepts of Islam.

Three dimensions of this curriculum are discussed below in order to give it a more concrete form and to distinguish it from traditional designs.

1. *Purposes of the Curriculum.* The program has three purposes: a) to inform students in general about Islam, b) to initiate each student into the activity of differentiating this faith from his/her own personal faith, and c) to revivify in Muslim students their personal faith.

The first purpose deals with the desire to engender in all students, Muslim and non-Muslim, a sense of their own spirituality, particularly as a consequence of positive values of all kinds including spiritual beliefs being challenged, if not undermined, daily through agencies like advertising and the media, violence, intimidation, and fear, and a general sense that "anything goes."

The second purpose deals with the desire for Muslim students to live their faith imaginatively in daily experience in order to deal successfully with the realities arising out of the present perceived failure of mainstream Islamic programs to engender interest in Islam on the part of young Muslims. As purposes, these orient one to the logical structure of Islamic thought as a disciplined activity, as distinguished from an orientation to aims, objectives, and to content prespecification and the characteristics of traditional preordinate designs.

A third purpose has to do with students contributing to the wider process of national identity formation in a new democratic state. As a more intangible purpose than those above, its achievement is dependent upon the former two purposes developing student capacity on the basis of knowledge and skills assimilated in the program and their subsequent ability to participate meaningfully in the unfolding debate on civil society.

2. *Pedagogy.* This curriculm's emphasis on activities adds to the task of the teachers, for they are the ones who must use the available material to bring to the attention of their students the concepts and codes of Islam to be learned. In addition, they must initiate students into the specific activities. In the case of Muslim students, this means to round out and deepen their faith, whereas in the case of non-Muslim students to help them differentiate Islamic concepts from those of their own faith.

In the former, pedagogy does not depend upon conveying content through "teacher talk." Rather, students uncover the concepts of Islam for themselves and with others based on the materials provided in the classroom. In this context, pedagogy includes video presentations followed by plenary sessions designed to elicit themes about Islam; open-ended student-led small group discussions to analyze Islamic concepts; and whole class discussions under the impartial chairpersonship of the student to elicit and increase through reading student understandings of Islam. Such a pedagogical emphasizes the teacher as "an" authority, a provider of opportunities to inquire, a colearner of Islam, and conceives of students as active, inquiring participants in the learning process.

More problematic is the teacher's role for initiating students into the activities of a faith. Teachers are not concerned with ways of thinking that bear little relation to student spirituality, but rather focus their attention on

the logical form or disciplinary thinking in Islam as an activity and as manifested in Muslim students' daily experience to which they are committed.

In its most elemental form, teachers cause Muslim students to reflect upon their experience of Islam, help them recognize its concepts in their daily life, and assist them to refine their understanding of Islam in progressively more insightful and sensitive ways. Reflecting upon Islam's disciplined way of thinking and the way it patterns action in daily life entails a pedagogy that develops students' capacity for critical self-scrutiny as well as a capacity for developing relationships between the self and others, including the teacher, that facilitates the analysis of Islamic precepts as manifested in students' daily experience. It entails students uncovering from within their own experiences the concepts and criteria of Islam to recognize its logic, to be empowered by it, and to refine, round out, and develop its logic in increasingly sensitive and practical ways as a guide to living. Pedagogy here emphasizes each student's discovery of the logical form of his/her faith from within his/her experience and the teacher's ability to prompt, explain, and facilitate the recognition and refinement of Islamic concepts in each student's experience.

This pedagogy also includes encouraging non-Muslim students to adopt a reflective mode when trying to distinguish their faith from the teachings of Islam learned in the course. In this case, teachers shift from a memorization mode directed at learning about Islam to a discursive mode aimed at reflection and critique. This entails, for example, small groups in which each student articulates the organizing concepts of his/her faith in order to distinguish them from the teachings of Islam, formal presentations by students to articulate the central concepts of their faith, which will lead to debates over differences with Islam and to affirmations orally and in written assignments of their commitment to their faith.

3. *Content: Organizing Concepts.* Islamic texts and formal teachings, as well as the Muslim's individual experience of the Islamic faith, provide sources for the material to be selected. Materials embody central concepts of Islam and include exemplars that illuminate vividly instances of Islamic thought and serve to guide subsequent thought and action. Exemplars provide ideals to aspire to, assist Muslim students in widening and deepening their understanding of Islam, and in unforeseen ways, influence their thinking on issues outside of their faith.[31] Exemplars are considered flexible learning entities. Both persons who are qualified in Islam as well as beginners select exemplars for the insight they give into the logical form of thinking in Islam as a discipline.

Concepts in the materials, it is suggested, can be grouped into four categories and include teachings from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, foundational concepts of Islam, Islamic values, and the duties of a Muslim. A brief sense of each category is given below.

a. *Teachings from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.* Materials include Qur'anic selections designed to guide (*hudā*) of humanity. Selections from the Sunnah include a record of the Prophet's life and example, his sayings, actions, and the attitudes he sanctioned for living in the world. Together, these materials encompass the laws of Islam from the governance of religious life to a system of jurisprudence for Islam. Precepts drawn from these provide the basic ground rules of Islamic spirituality. These materials embody what a Muslim should do, and compliance with them involves enjoining that which is commonly accepted as good and desirable (*ma'rūf*) and forbidding that which is condemned (*munkar*).[32]

b. *Foundational concepts of Islam.* The first, *tawḥīd*, refers to the oneness of God and His sovereignty over the universe. It encompasses a student's appreciation that his/her mortality elicits a need for greater understanding than is available in humanity (it is provided through God), the need to rise above human weakness to believe in Islam, and tolerance toward other beliefs. The second, *risālah*, refers to viewing all of the prophets, their teachings, and Islamic texts as God's communication with humanity. It expresses His guidance to humanity via the straight path (*ṣirāṭ al mustaqīm*) and the valuing of what is positive and good and rejecting what is harmful and evil. The third, *ākhirah*, refers to the need for students to appreciate the fact that guidance in life is necessary and that the afterlife encompasses accountability not only to one's peers or neighbors but also to an omnipotent being. It also directs one's attention to aspirations that transcend mortality in order to encourage one to look beyond blind reaction in the present to consequences in the present and the hereafter.[33]

c. *Islamic values.* The Islamic values selected include justice and equality, compassion and forgiveness, learning and excellence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and love and obedience to God and parents. Islamic values indicate that leadership is implicit in the teachings of Islam, *muttaqī* referring to Muslims who are God-conscious in thought, feeling, and action in all circumstances who decide, and then assume, leadership roles. The selections indicate that Islam values life and its conservation in all of its many forms and that it upholds values guiding such human conduct as honesty, good neighborliness, chastity, and care for the body.[34]

d. *Duties of Muslims.* Selections here indicate that *ṣalāh* (prayer), *ṣawm* (fasting), zakah (payment of alms), hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah), and jihad (the continuous striving to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil) discipline Islamic life in ways that need to be reconciled with their daily experience.[35] Duties are commemorated and celebrated in various festivals (*'īd al fiṭr* and *'īd al aḍḥā*) and manifested through adherence to codes regulating "cultural outcroppings"[36] of the faith, such as diet and dress.[37]

Content, the third dimension of this curriculum also breaks with the assumption implicit in traditional designs that content is prioritized over other design dimensions. Here, content is essential and integral to the curriculum. However, while it provides concepts and exemplars of the Islamic faith, it does not cover all of the concepts that may be required in the course. Concepts and exemplars uncovered by students through reflection on experience and not included in materials contribute additional content for inclusion. This encourages students engaged in activities to learn Islam from within and suggests a more open-ended concept of content than content as prespecifications in traditional designs. In addition, concepts and exemplars drawn from Islamic texts represent patterned activities or recipe knowledge that pattern Muslim thinking and action.

The content of this curriculum, thus, is not to be confused with the substantive content prespecified in mainstream designs and aimed at learning and testing. More generally, it seems that this dimension is developed with greater confidence than other dimensions in the design. This is perhaps to be expected, as it represents more settled understandings of the Islamic faith that have been a source of debate and a focus of scholarly activity in Muslim society for centuries, as in the case of Spain, for example, since the eighth century C.E.[38]

Discussion

1. It should be noted that this innovation has little to do with attempts to extend the influence of Islam in the country through the curriculum. The intention of this design, which is only one component of a world religion curriculum, is to counteract the previously unbalanced (and exclusively Christian) portrayal of religion as a compulsory school subject in state schools from grade 1 through 12. This innovation contributes to a state initiative to expand "religion" beyond Christianity in order to better inform students about organized religion here and abroad. This initiative attempts, secondly, to ground students within their own faith through examining the concepts and teachings of Islam and other faiths. Thirdly, and at a more general level, it represents an attempt through the curriculum to engender the development of a common national identity.

2. Historically, students who wished to specialize in religion as a matriculation subject (grades 10 to 12, or grades 8 to 12) could only pursue Biblical Studies as an academic subject. Consequently, it was studied mainly by Christian students. The recently announced Accommodation Model, which grants discretion to school communities as to which religion curriculum a school will follow, indicates explicitly that other religions need to be present in the curriculum for academic study up to and including matriculation.[39] Such a stipulation forces religious workers of all faiths to plan curricula now so that schools can choose non-Christian faiths for

specialized study in 1995 and beyond. Thus the innovation in question also provides a basis for designing an Islamic Studies curriculum as a specialization in Religious Education for academic study up to and including the matriculation level.

3. Activity curricula are notoriously difficult to teach and to disseminate widely. Teachers themselves must be instructed in how to teach these curricula, need to avoid corrupting a new design and falling back into mainstream assumptions about teaching and learning, and need to relinquish mainstream assumptions about communication in classrooms being directive and controlling. Experience with the Humanities Curriculum Project in the United Kingdom opened teachers of this curriculum to charges of elitism, which arose partly out of the training they received in the use of its materials and out of a sense of loss experienced by teachers not in the program. In the United States, *Man: A Course of Study* foundered in rural America when claims made about the curriculum linked it to secular humanism.[40]

In addition to grounded and micropolitical issues, dissemination is also made more problematic because activity curricula cannot be packaged and distributed easily. As in the case of *Breakthrough-to-Literacy*, which appeared in seven South African vernacular languages, dissemination of materials was linked to teacher training and required ongoing service agency support from outside, formal support from inside the system, and incentives (such as annual conferences, paid study abroad, promotion routes in the state system) to ensure the innovation was implemented. Activity curricula, it would seem, are complex entities needing support over long periods of time. There is little to suggest that the case of the Islamic curriculum in question will be any different from the experience of other activity curricula both here and abroad.

4. Can this component of a state world religion curriculum contribute to an appreciation of the diversity of faiths in the country and contribute to the development of a common national identity? Hashem's analysis of Muslims in the United States offers a useful perspective on this question. Using Gordon's model of assimilation, Hashem argues that when a large-scale relationship occurs between a minority group and the wider society and the former begins to enter into the institutions, clubs, cliques, and so on of the latter in significant numbers, the full range of assimilation types (behavioral, identification, behavior–receptional, attitudinal–receptional, civic, marital) begin to occur.[41] Structural assimilation, the term used to refer to this condition, leads to the minority group gradually beginning to lose its distinctive traits. For Muslims, he suggests, this poses two problems: The norms and practices of the wider society may be problematic from an Islamic point of view, and the unwritten goals of such institutions may, for example, maintain forms of social stratification that are problematic for Muslims.

Thus Hashem points to wider questions linking curriculum reform to the recognition of diversity and the formation of a shared national identity. His view suggests that the impact of a values-based minority program, such as the innovation in question, if disseminated only to a small number of schools as a result of their decision against a world religion curriculum, would be seriously reduced due to the lack of a sufficiently large-scale relationship with the wider society. This position is advocated by Hashem as a resolution to the problem of the assimilation of Muslims into mainstream American culture. It also reflects the current position of traditional Muslim curricula in South Africa, which have been disseminated historically only to private Islamic schools and *madaris*. If the Islamic faith is to have any impact on the development of a common national South African identity, a large number of schools need to decide to implement the world religion curriculum.

Hashem argues that a national identity develops through the daily experience of persons (as a collective) and through civic participation. By investing a great deal of psychic energy in the society in general—through Muslims contributing to a national curriculum, for example—Hashem anticipates that a (Muslim) minority group will contribute to some kind of national identity formation, an identity that will intensify national feelings and a sense of belonging. Under these circumstances, it is almost impossible for a Muslim who was born in a country and who has had most of his/her life experiences in that country not to have a sense of national identity. Conversely, it is possible for a politically active Muslim immigrant to develop a sense of national identity through his/her participation in the life of his/her adopted country.

He argues further that the Islamization of this identity comes through locating it within the Islamic universal outlook, which guards it from developing into an identity of superiority and exclusiveness. In other words, he claims that Islam as a creed channels the national identity to a sense of priority in efforts directed toward those which are closer in relation to Muslims. Thus he cautions (American) Muslims to be aware of and to guard against specific national identities that may include appeals to exclusivity and particular ideals. Islamizing the national identity cannot occur unless an exclusive focus on a Muslim identity is lifted.[42]

For curricula such as the innovation in question to engage students imaginatively in the activities of their faith so that they can contribute to specific and national identity formation, they need to go beyond the interests of a creed as well as beyond mere transmission. Curricula and their development, as Hamilton reminds us, are part of wider processes in society.[43] In the case of South Africa, these are directed toward the recognition of diversity as difference and as carrying a positive valuation, and growth toward a shared national identity to replace the pseudo- and state-imposed equivalent of the past. Clearly an engagement in these processes via curriculum construction suggests the need for innovative curricula that take seriously the disciplined activities of one's own and other creeds, for ped-

agogies engendering psychic energy directed toward understanding beliefs, for believers to guard against a sense of exclusivity and superiority, and the ability to lift one's gaze above an exclusive focus on one's own identity.

Endnotes

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