
Dear Chris,

Greetings from a fellow AIM colleague. According to my data you served from 1990 to 1996 in church leadership training at Nampula in Zimbabwe, together with your wife Karen and you speak Swahili. The Swahili may mean you spent some time in Kenya?

With my wife, Joyce, we spent over 30 years in Kenya focusing on developing Christian teaching (Bible teaching) of the churches. Joyce taught Christian education at Scott Theological College for 20 years. After working on developing Religious education curriculum for schools in Kenya we moved to Machakos and in 1973 when I was asked to head up the establishment of a Christian Education Commission by the Association of Evangelicals in Africa we moved to Nairobi. Our last 12 years were devoted to establishing the Christian Learning Materials Centre alongside the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. Joyce died in 1992 and in 1993 I married the widow of Jack Phillips who taught at Scott Theological College. Our children grew up together on the Machakos station.

I received Don Brown's email (copied at end of this message) via my aimint.org email address, but I am writing to you via the internet address that I use more commonly.

Your email says that you are working on the subject of self-reliance and dependency in missions. And that you are trying to locate a particular study that was done in Kenya by a missionary who investigated the problems associated with granting scholarships to Bible school students. The study we did which is closest to the topic you want, and which Don Brown is referring to, is not dealing with granting scholarships to Bible school students. Rather, it investigates the question of why giving Bible School training to pastors of African churches is not resulting in Bible teaching being passed on to the believers in the churches -- as intended.

I am attaching a text file which provides an abbreviated summary of our report, in case it might be of use to you.

Sincerely, Roger E. Coon

Africa Inland Church - East Africa
Teaching in the Churches Survey
Abbreviated Report to the A.I.C. Training Department Board:
SURVEY OF BIBLE TEACHING IN THE CHURCHES

During the months of May and June, 1994, Roger and Geri Coon came out from America to do a survey of Bible teaching in the churches. This research was arranged by the C.E.D. Director and the Director of the Training Department. The purpose was to learn more about the needs for Bible teaching and to find ways in which additional help can be provided for strengthening Bible teaching.

Mr. Coon was the founder and first director of the C.E.D. He and his wife were also teachers at the beginning of Scott Theological College. For 20 years Mr. Coon was head of the AEAM Christian Education Commission and he also served as a member of the Theological Commission and of ACTEA. From 1980-91 Mr. Coon was the founder and director of the Christian Learning Materials Centre.

Mr. and Mrs. Coon have visited eleven A.I.C. Bible Schools. They have interviewed the students and the staff and also C.E.D. staff and other church workers. The inquiry was not about Bible Schools but about what Bible teaching is being done in the churches. 643 students in the Bible Schools filled in a survey questionnaire about Bible teaching in their home churches. The staff and church workers were asked for ideas and suggestions about strengthening Bible teaching in the churches. After gathering all this information it was processed by computer and put into a 25-page report for the use of the Bible Schools in curriculum planning and for the C.E.D. and others to use in ministries planning. Mr. and Mrs. Coon returned to the Bible Schools and presented the report and suggestions in their staff meetings.

ACTION ON THE REPORT is in the hands of the Training Department Board, the C.E.D. and each of the Bible Schools. These are to bring matters for church action to the church councils.

Mr. and Mrs. Coon were impressed by the large number of Bible Schools students and by the dedication of Bible Schools teachers. This gives encouragement and hope for what can be done. They also found progress in the Christian education activities. Figures on Sunday Schools, camps, and youth programs are significant. Most of these ministries were nonexistent 30 years ago. In the past few years suitable Bible teaching materials for African churches have become available at all age levels and for a variety of programmes. However the survey showed that there is little teaching in the churches for youth and adults. Evangelism is strong but teaching is weak. The people are not being fed.

A reason for this can be found in the priorities of the church. As long ago as 1982 research done by Dr. Wetzel for the Christian Education Department asked Bible Schools students and church members to select kinds of leadership development that they regarded as most important. They all gave lowest importance to: "The work of pastors must be changed so that they teach or train as well as preach." In contrast, they all gave top importance to: "Every Christian must be taught how to tell the good news of Jesus to non-believers." They gave importance to the need for "Christians to be taught how to live in the world and avoid its evil things," but they did not seem to recognize that these needs for teaching are the responsibility of pastors.

Africa Inland Church - East Africa
Teaching in the Churches Survey

SUMMARY FINDINGS IN SURVEY OF BIBLE TEACHING IN THE CHURCHES

The average for the 580 home churches of present Kenya Bible Schools students shows that there is little difference for Bible teaching when the church has a Bible School trained pastor:

78 % of the churches are under the care of a pastor trained in Bible School.

The average pastor has nearly four churches.

152 people attend Sunday morning service but only 6 attend a structured Bible study. That is 4%, 4 people out of 100 in the A.I.C.

10% of the churches with a trained pastor have B.E.E. or some kind of Bible teaching group for adults (one church out of ten having a trained pastor) . That is 5 % more than churches without a trained pastor. But only 4% of the people come to this Bible teaching where there is a trained pastor, while 5.5% in the smaller churches come where there is no trained pastor.

BUT 48% of the kalenjin churches with Sitotwet trained elders have Bible study for adults and 20% of the people (youth & adults) are in Bible study. (This impacts the findings for all Kalenjin churches = 24% of churches and 8% of people attending youth or adult Bible studies.)

Churches with trained pastors are larger (172 average Sunday morning service) than churches with no trained pastor (81 average). Is that because trained pastors build up larger churches, or because trained pastors are assigned to larger churches?

The trained pastor preaches only half the time in churches which have a trained pastor. Most do little preparation.

Churches with a trained pastor have a few more Cadettes and Battalion. Is that because the pastor encourages it, or because the church is larger and the people do it?

The number of churches that have Bible teaching lesson books for Sunday School or youth is about the same, whether there is a trained pastor or not. (Just over half for Sunday Schools, under half where students

reported youth groups that study the Bible.)

The number of churches having Sunday School, C.Y.A. and camp and choir is about the same, whether there is a trained pastor or not.

How much understanding of God's teachings do most of the people have? (Question asked to Bible Schools students with regard to their home churches.)

"They have very little, except catechism and they seem to lose that. When asked about simple things in the Bible they don't know. They go to church and that is all." "The people only know the (scattered) bits of the Bible that preaching deals with." "They don't understand what the church is." "Only a few who were deeply involved in Satanic things understand some about salvation. Most only know 'believe' and 'leave some sins'." "Children learn some verses and Bible stories. After catechism and baptism that is the end of it." "Wrong behaviour is widely allowed. They don't seem to know what to do."

Reasons for the Neglect of Teaching in the Churches:

The interviews with Bible Schools staff, African Christian Education program regional and national staff, and others, indicate multiple factors underlying the problem.

The biggest reason may be that "feeding the sheep" is not a priority in the A.I.C.

Other reasons reported are:

- human nature (aspirations for leadership rather than a ministry of the Word),
- some are practical (inadequate pastoral salaries require them to engage in other work),
- some are educational (training curriculum that emphasizes giving a lot of content with little thinking, and trains the pastor mostly for preaching with little training for teaching and helping others to teach, and gives little attention to motivation and practical insights and skills),
- some are administrative (lack of agreed pastoral job descriptions for different kinds of pastorates that list what should be provided in every church),
- some are local unavailability of good Bible teaching lesson books for the people in the churches,
- and over it all is the enormity of change required that Christians in the churches might be taught as they need to be.

These problems need action by church leadership for some things, by Bible School staff for others, and help by Bible Schools and perhaps by the mission in offering personnel and assistance for getting Bible teaching materials to all the churches.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

Results from a survey conducted in May-June 1994. 643 students in eleven Bible Schools and Colleges and Bible Training Centres filled in an orally administered survey questionnaire. They were asked seven questions about their own aspirations and 34 questions about their home churches.

95.9% of teenagers and adults in the A.I.C. churches are not receiving systematic Bible teaching.

Trained pastors are assigned to 454 out of 580 Kenya churches reported in the survey.

78% of the churches are under the care of a pastor who has been trained in a four-year Bible School.

However it is generally felt that the people in the churches are still not being taught. It is evident that we cannot assume training church leaders will assuredly result in maturing churches.

The average trained pastor preaches at the home church 2.1 times in a month, and the average is much lower for the western half of Kenya where pastors serve an average of 4.5 churches each and preach in the home church just over once a month.

Preaching alone, even if all preachers were greatly gifted pulpit Bible expositors, cannot provide people with a comprehensive understanding of the whole Word of God. The opinion of teachers and church workers interviewed is that little preparation goes into much preaching and sermon content is both elementary and repetitive.

It should be noted that the answers given by students regarding sermon topics in the home churches did not apparently distinguish between systematic or exegetical teaching versus simple preaching based upon the Bible. Thus many students reported sermons preached in their home churches as being a form of Bible teaching, which might not be so categorized by Bible Schools teachers.

NOTES: The Sitotwet, Ravine, Ahero and Missionary College training centres are not four-year Bible schools. They were included in the survey to get information about the churches from which their students come. And also to be able to consult with their staff about the problem of lack of teaching in the churches. In addition we were able to get information on churches where Sitotwet graduate elders have served. This information is reported with the reports of churches according to the schools where their pastors studied. (See SUMMARY FINDINGS above, comparison of churches led by graduates of the regular Bible Schools with churches led

by Sitotwet graduates. "10% of the churches with a Bible School trained pastor have B.E.E. or some kind of Bible teaching group for adults (one church out of ten having a trained pastor). But only 4% of the people come to this Bible teaching. BUT 48% of the churches with Sitotwet trained elders have Bible study for adults and 20% of the people (youth & adults) are in Bible study.

The Sitotwet and Ahero Bible Training Centres have a practical program for men who have already been serving the Lord in their home churches. The program lasts for two years, during which time the students come to the Centre for two weeks and then go home to practice what they have learned for six weeks. At the School they study one subject for one week, than another subject for the second week before going back to their church. After six weeks they return to the Centre for two more courses. While they are at home they are all visited by the head of the School who discusses their work with them. They also write reports when they return to the School. Two of the four-year Bible Schools now accept Sitotwet students into their program with one year of credit for their Sitotwet studies.

The percentage of churches having adult Bible studies for Sitotwet student's home churches would be 100% if the students had answered according to their present situation. A condition of elder training at Sitotwet is that every student must have a Bible study group at his home church using the Sitotwet Bible study books as he is taught at the Training Centre. In order that we might get information representing all the churches in their area the students were asked for what was happening in their home churches before they came to the Training Centre. However some of the home churches of these students had sent elders earlier for training. The Bible studies they had created could be counted. For this reason the percentage of adults and youth in Bible studies at these home churches does show the results of earlier training of other students for doing Bible studies.

Stated aspirations of students in A.I.C. Bible Schools and Colleges compared to actual activities in reported church operations.

TOTAL SURVEYED: 643 total in eleven institutions .

WHAT I WANT TO DO AS A PASTOR (by average or % of students)

WANT HOW MANY CHURCHES 1.7 churches

WANT TO PREACH EVERY MONTH 2.6 times

HAVE VISITING PREACHER 1.5 times a month

SERMON TOPIC 62% evangelism

SERMON TOPIC 56% teaching

SERMON TOPIC 63% how to live

SERMON TOPIC 49% series.

WANT SUNDAY SCHOOL TO BE 8% for all ages.

WANT YOUTH TO HAVE 69% Bible study

WANT YOUTH TO HAVE 77% Christian Youth Fellowship meetings

WANT YOUTH TO HAVE 69% choir.

WANT YOUTH TO HAVE 8% rallies

WANT YOUTH TO HAVE 62% camps

WANT YOUTH TO HAVE 51% Cadettes (girls activity program ages 8 - 14)

WANT YOUTH TO HAVE 49% Battalion (boys activity program ages 10 - 14)

WANT ADULT TO HAVE 84% Bible study

WHAT WAS REPORTED ABOUT PASTORS IN HOME CHURCHES

(by average or % of churches reported)

AVERAGE CHURCHES SERVED 3.8 churches

TIMES PREACH EVERY MONTH 2.0 in month

SERMON TOPIC 43% evangelism

SERMON TOPIC 46% teaching

SERMON TOPIC 73% how to live

SERMON TOPIC 17% series

SUNDAY SCHOOL 98% have Sunday Schools but only 61% of classes have books and almost 0% have Sunday School for all ages

HAVE FOR YOUTH 30% say have "Bible study", only 23% say have class and only 39% of those classes have any lesson books.

HAVE FOR YOUTH 65% Christian Youth Fellowship meetings

HAVE FOR YOUTH 55% have choir.

HAVE FOR YOUTH 7% rallies

HAVE FOR YOUTH 87% of churches have camps available.
78% of churches sent youth to camp.

HAVE FOR YOUTH 22% Cadettes

HAVE FOR YOUTH 11% Battalion

HAVE FOR ADULTS 18% churches with Bible study or B.E.E. (extension classes) for a few members

Average attendance at morning worship = 152

*The % for wanting Sunday School for all ages reflects the view that Sunday School is a children's program. Contrast the % wanting to have adult Bible studies.

**Average number of adults in Bible studies = 2.87 persons / 152 = 1.885X

**Average number of youth in Bible studies = 2.94 youth / 152 = 2.205%

**Average adults and youth in Bible studies - 5.77 adults & youth / 152 = 4.090%

**The averages cited here show a % of the total membership of the AIC churches reported which are involved in Bible study.

Africa Inland Church - East Africa
Teaching in the Churches Survey
Follow-up

QUESTIONS PRESENTED TO THE BIBLE SCHOOLS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Could the Bible School look at the relevance of the training in the light of Teaching in the Churches Survey page 5 (just above in this paper): How well does the training match student aspirations and actual church operations?
2. Could the Bible School work (with the students) on pastoral job descriptions for different kinds of pastorates that list what should be provided in every church?
3. Could the Bible School help bring the attention of church councils to the problem of low understanding of the things of God among church members? a) That the councils might suggest what can be done, b) Perhaps to work with the Bible Schools in preparing agreed job descriptions for Bible School graduates, c) To find means of giving double honour to those among the leaders of the churches whose work is preaching and teaching, as 1 TIMOTHY 5:17 calls us to do.
4. Could the Bible School consider adopting the Sitotwet model for first year Bible School curriculum? This might be done by choosing half of the Sitotwet two-year curriculum, and leaving the other subjects taught at Sitotwet to be covered in years 2 - 3 - 4 of the Bible School. Thus the first year students would come with the same home church agreements used by Sitotwet. They would take the initial two subjects, one week at a time for two weeks and using the same study methods and materials that they will use back at their home church. After two weeks they would return to their home church for 6 weeks to begin giving these teachings to the people. At the middle of the first term they would return to the School for two more weeks of class followed by another 6 weeks putting it into practice at their home church. The first year teachers would observe and review the students' practical work as it is done with Sitotwet students. Thus during the first year students would make the trip to Bible School twice each term instead of once. Their first year would be very practical and prepare them for better understanding what they would study the next three years. Also entrance to the second year could depend upon this being recommended by the first year supervisors.
5. Could the Bible School adopt a pattern of staff ministry for all Bible School teachers whereby teachers set an example of what they teach? That is, teachers would be actively involved as a local church member in fulfilling some aspect of the kind of church ministry they are teaching their students. At present many Bible School teachers are expected to visit multiple churches, often preaching, and students tend to repeat this example.
6. Could the Bible School have a church teaching tools bookshop to serve the students and churches where the students attend or serve (and perhaps other churches in the region as well)? Many schools indicated that their graduates are hindered from initiating Bible study groups because materials are not available to them.
7. Could the Bible School have staff workshops where courses are revised or planned from back to front, with reference to the steps of learning and applying the findings of relevant educational research? (Back to front: instead of starting to plan with what we want to teach, start with what we want to be the result in the churches. From that determine what commitment and skills are necessary. From that determine what the students must have experienced to reach such commitment and skills. From that determine what they need

to know and understand in order to reach such an experience.)

8. Could the Bible School provide continuing help to pastors to assist them after graduation to fulfill what they were trained to do. This assistance might be practical in making arrangements or getting materials, it might be 'hands on' guidance in how to do a certain thing, etc.

END OF FILE ON:

Report to the A.I.C. Training Department Board:

SURVEY OF BIBLE TEACHING IN THE CHURCHES

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Chris Little

Director of International Ministries

World Mission Associates