

Third International Training Consultation Emmaus Bible College

May 27-31, 2014

Workshop 3.5 Training and self-support courses.

Workshop Remit: Introducing life-skills/income support courses into Bible college curriculum – the pros and cons. In many parts of the world full or part-time Christian ministry is dependent on the workers own ability to self-support. How can we better enable students to develop self-support skills alongside Biblical studies and spiritual development.

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1. A Brief look at a Theology of Work:

- a) Is work part of the curse?
- b) What do we learn from the example of the Lord Jesus regarding physical labor?
- c) Will we be forever idle in Heaven?
- d) How does the Bible sanction productive labor? artistic endeavor? police/military service?

2. Support of Christian Workers

- a. Does commendation imply financial support?
 - a) What are some dangers of commendation? Do full-time workers get treated like employees of the Christians back home?
 - b) What is the "double honor" mentioned in I Timothy?
 - c) Are there advantages in being self-supported?

3. Bi-Vocational – avoiding the sacred/secular divide

- a) Is there any conflict between spiritual work and physical labor?
- b) What examples have you witnessed of missionaries and godly elders who were also artisans and handymen?
- c) What does it imply when a person is reluctant to get his hands dirty or bear a load?

- d) Do you think it is practical to try to train Christian workers in Bible skills and in practical/technical expertise simultaneously?

4. Blending Training in practical skills with Biblical and Ministry Studies

- a) How does I Cor. 7:23 apply to the choice of a job/profession?
- b) How does participation in productive labor give a person credibility with the community?
- c) What are some professions that are directly supportive of ministry?
- d) Is it possible to prepare our disciples better in the advent they will occupy positions of authority?

Introducing life-skills/income support courses into Bible college curriculum – the pros and cons.

In many parts of the world full or part-time Christian ministry is dependent on the workers own ability to self-support. How can we better enable students to develop self-support skills alongside Biblical studies and spiritual development.

In addition to what the brothers have proposed find here under my thoughts to consider adding:

Support challenges faced by Christian workers: What major challenges do fulltime workers face when they get back to the field after biblical studies?

1. Poverty
2. HIV / AIDS issues (Orphans and widows)
3. Self-support (Food security and income for essential goods)
4. Local churches belief – bible college graduate provides it all

The Brethren and Dependency Syndrome: What are the effects of dependency syndrome(Misconceptions on full time workers support ...whoever receives a prophet and or offer a glass of water shares the rewards)

1. How do we address / change of mindset from dependency to self-sustenance?
2. Lessons from Paul and Tent making

Self-sustainability of the Bible School: How do we recover from sponsored bible schools into self-sponsored and sustenance.

SAMFYA BIBLE SCHOOL STORY

For many years, the school never followed up on issues affecting past students when they go on the field.

Members of staff and the Board decided to take a survey that covered three (now four) provinces to ascertain what challenges the past students faced.

FINDINGS

1. Gaps exist at the bible college – students needed to be prepared holistically by having life supporting skills incorporated into biblical teachings.
2. Fulltime workers have challenges on how they could balance between proclaiming the word and looking after their own families
3. The school's dependency syndrome...the Board started thinking of how the college can be self-sustainable through such activities that support the school finances

Life skills training: The core of the life skills program focuses on agriculture. Students are required to take both crop and animal production courses and participate in managing the school's demonstration farm. Lessons are learnt from the School poultry as well. Wives are given additional skills in knitting and sewing. For practical's, students travel to a rural village in Samfya district and participate in the setup and monitoring of several Church based agricultural projects including, a kitchen garden program and a poultry program. In future Students will also have the opportunity to study basic computer, entrepreneurship and business management, carpentry and joinery and bricklaying.

Testimonies from past students on how the life skills have helped them be self-sustainable

- With a working knowledge of agriculture production, students can now be able both to provide food for family consumption and generate some income for expenditure.
- Students also use their agriculture skills to develop Church outreach ministry once they return home to their local churches.

PROPOSED QUESTIONS

1. How can we invigorate the potential of being self-sustainable for college graduating students?
2. Is dependency syndrome - killer or sustainer of the full time workers?
3. The early missionary was given gifts by the sending church and agencies, what lessons can we learn from the western church in support for fulltime workers?
4. We have come a long way...where are we...what does the future hold for us?

SOME PICTURES:



Demonstration Farm



A week old chicks



Students in the demo farm



Harvested Corn from Demo farm