

Deaf students receive accredited qualifications



Back row left to right: Jeremy Bloxham (VCI Director: Corporate Risk), Anthony Salie, Hennie Burger, Dr Rocco Hough (Chairman DCMA advisory committee), Rev Jan Oberholzer (Head: DCMA); Rev Ivan Skinner (VCI Director: Training Operations), Dr Bennie Wolvaardt (VCI Principal and CEO). Front row left to right: Rensburg Aggenbach, Rev Mia Lintvelt (DCMA Training), Elsabé Döman, Moira Wolvaardt (VCI Director: Vocational Training)

Imagine a group of 400 000 people living in a "Christian" country and only 2 000 of this group are ministered to by the church in that country. Imagine believers from this group wanting to become pastors to minister to their own people, but no institution is able to train them to fulfill their dream and calling.

The above comes from our 2006 newsletter and talks about the deaf community in South Africa. Since then the Lord has really provided in ways many thought impossible. DCMA (Deaf Christian Ministry Africa) who uses the Veritas accredited training to train deaf students for ministry, has worked hard in making the material deaf-friendly for students coming from different backgrounds and educational levels.

In 2007 the first 7 deaf students received their Certificate IV in Biblical Ministry from Veritas College International (VCI). After that it was the Diploma of Biblical Ministry and in April 2009, four of these students received their Advanced Diploma of Biblical Ministry - see photo.

The Advanced Diploma focuses on leadership development and management skills which equip and enable prospective leaders and pastors to lead a congregation or ministry successfully. The main part of the qualification is done in the form of a project which is designed to be appropriate to the particular ministry and gifting of the student.

The following projects were successfully undertaken by the students:

- Rensburg Aggenbach compiled a songbook for the deaf in sign language (yes! - a songbook - it is amazing to

see the deaf praise and worship)

- Hennie Burger made a DVD in which new deaf believers are lead to grow spiritually
- Elsabé Döman made a DVD in which stories from the Bible are told in sign language to deaf children
- Anthony Salie wrote a Sunday school book for Grade 4 deaf learners

All of these projects will and are already making a big impact in the deaf community in South Africa and further afield. The work was of such a high standard that the students only need to do one more unit to receive their Graduate Diploma qualification.

After completing their "church year", these students will be ordained in two denominations as ministers / pastors to the deaf at the end of 2009. All glory to God for whom nothing is impossible!

Pray with DCMA and VCI as DCMA wants to move into the next phase of its calling - training deaf pastors and leaders outside of South Africa.



Rev Mia Lintvelt (standing), who pioneered the training, facilitating student interaction



Veritas leaders from various countries meeting in Stellenbosch

Leaders meet in Stellenbosch

In March the Veritas leaders from various countries met together in Stellenbosch, South Africa. It was a great encouragement to share with one another how the training is developing in each of the twenty seven countries where Veritas is working.

One of the key impressions that we could take away from the meeting was the impact that the training is having in a wide variety of churches and settings. The lives of churches, families and individuals are being changed and this then spills over into the culture and society. We were also reminded again of the difficult local circumstances under which many of the staff work.

We had wonderful times of fellowship and inspiring devotions led by various leaders and opportunities to pray for one another and the ministries. VCI policies and procedures were explained and discussed, making the information as practical as possible.

We also had fun times together and a meal high light was on the Saturday when we had a BBQ on the farm of friends of the ministry. We were treated to glorious views of the Franschhoek valley, and all agreed that the food was excellent.

This meeting was a great blessing to all the leaders and fulfils a very important function in the international Veritas network.



Thirty delegates arriving to enjoy a BBQ on a farm in the Stellenbosch area

Training in 'forgotten' areas



Mamma Liena in the centre, is from the Transkei and is illiterate, but God has given her the gift to read only the Bible! A fellow participant writes answers in Mamma Liena's workbook

We all know these towns where, when you swerve to avoid running over a chicken in the road, you don't just miss the chicken, but also the town! These forgotten places where you think nothing happens. Many of the rural areas in South Africa have become like this. The people of the Northern Cape are even called by some "the forgotten people".

"I realised that God does not look for equipped people, He equips me through His Word so that I am able to serve Him."
"I now know with certainty that I am a child of God."

"The Lord saw my desire to learn more from the Bible and sent you to Brandvlei. I never thought my dream would come true, but it did ... I left school after grade 1 ... now nobody will keep me quiet."

"We are thankful to see the growth in the students' lives. Some of them now act with greater confidence in the congregation. They start preaching at the different prayer houses / outposts and help with funerals."

Looking at the above testimonies (directly translated from Afrikaans) from participants and the last one from a pastor, we see that God does not forget His people. These people are part of two new projects Veritas College South Africa started in the

last 18 months - one in the Eastern Cape (Transkei) amongst Xhosa speaking believers and the other in the Northern Cape. Both these areas are amongst the poorest in South Africa. Rev Riaan Terblanche leads the work in the Eastern Cape and Rev Theuns Henn in the Northern Cape. At the moment the main focus is to strengthen the churches with more trained leaders.

How is proper pastoral care and spiritual growth obtained when there is only one trained pastor and a few evangelists to serve 7 churches, where each church has at least 6 outposts? We believe a difference is now being made with 60 participants

from 4 towns in the Northern Cape doing Module 1 and 80 in the Eastern Cape doing Module 1 and 2. Some local facilitators have been trained in the Transkei and they are training some Module 1 participants themselves. This is a great encouragement as Veritas would like them to take local ownership as soon as possible. It is the only way to plant sustainable leadership training that will influence the generations to come in otherwise hopeless situations and areas.

Pray with us for more workers in these areas as the harvest is ripe, but the workers are few!



Rev Theuns Henn training at Nieuwoudtville

Training in Mexico

The ministry in Mexico under the leadership of Rev Marco and Rosa Reyes is having an impact in a growing number of churches. It is a great help that most of the modules have already been translated into Spanish.



Marco Reyes facilitating training

The Church and Society

Some sociologists have come to the conclusion that the function of religion is to legitimise or condone the institutions and behaviour of society. For the church, this means that it should support the emperor blindly when he goes on his next conquest and should motivate society to do the same. Soldiers for the cause are supported by chaplains and seen as heroes of God's Kingdom.

When it comes to morality, norms are adapted to fit the values of society. If society is conservative, then the views of the church will be conservative. If society is liberal, then the church changes its views accordingly. The church is there to serve society and in return, society tolerates the church and rewards it with support, approval and even at times with honour.

This concept of the church serving society is certainly not a novel idea. While writing his last letter, Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Tim 4:3): "The time will come when people will not listen to sound doctrine, but will follow their own desires and will collect for themselves more and more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear." He also wrote about people who "will hold to the outward form of our religion, but reject its real power" (2 Tim 3:5). Paul called these teachers "false prophets" and fiercely opposed their teaching and influence on the church.

Almost 2000 years later we still find preachers, teachers and leaders in the church who fit this description. They are found around the world in a wide variety of cultures, traditions and churches. Although they have the appearance of being Christian believers, they are not committed to God's message and lead many astray.

In 2 Tim 3:10-17 Paul provides Timothy with advice on how to live and minister in the midst of this climate of false teaching.

Paul tells Timothy that he should continue to follow the truths that he was taught from Scripture, and be aware that they are

able to give him "the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (v15). As believers today we should remember that our salvation is based on the message of the Scriptures and that the truths of the Bible have an eternal impact.

People who serve God need to be equipped for their work (v17). This involves being able to handle the Bible to teach truths, rebuke error, correct faults and to give instructions for right living (v16). Using the Bible in this way is a key for fruitful ministry.

Paul encourages Timothy to remain faithful in spite of the fact that he may be persecuted (v12). To minister effectively from God's Word requires commitment to God's truth in spite of opposition. Usually false doctrine gains ground not because the majority of pastors or church members support it, but because they are too scared to stand up against it and rid the church of it. Given enough time to take root, false doctrine grows like a deadly cancer and usually leads to the corruption of the next generations of church leaders who are indoctrinated by false doctrine in seminaries.

Paul instructs Timothy (2:2) to train faithful believers who in turn will be able to train others. As one Veritas College student who now pastors a large church once said to me, "How would I have been able to do the job if I was not trained to do it?" There are so many cases around the world where proper

Bible training is not available to those who have to minister. Some fast growing denominations have thousands of pastors without adequate training.

Our prayer is that more and more believers and church leaders around the world will be equipped to handle God's Word in such a way that the church will be able to minister God's message effectively to society. In this way society will be influenced in an increasing measure by God's message and not the church by the lifestyle of secular society.

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