

AFRICA WEST: AN ECLECTIC APPROACH TO MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

All Africa West programs offer the Diploma in Theology (Dip.Th.) However, the delivery systems vary according to the location and availability of personnel.

- ❑ ***Nigeria*** – Nigeria Nazarene Theological College in Abak, Nigeria, is a day school meeting Monday-Friday, with 20 students. It is staffed by 2 full-time missionaries, and uses occasional lecturers drawn from graduates of the school.
- ❑ ***Cape Verde*** – The Cape Verde Seminary has 16 students, with 8-10 in residence. The rest commute, making it a combination residential/day school. It has a full time principal, who also serves as primary professor. A part-time instructor assists with the course load.
- ❑ ***Institut Biblique Nazareen (IBN)*** – This operated for 10 years as a day school in Ivory Coast, but recently was transitioned to the de-centralized system, in order to accommodate other francophone countries on the Field (Senegal, Burkino Faso, Benin). It is staffed by the Field Education Coordinator, working with national lecturers chosen for various courses.
- ❑ ***Africa Nazarene School of Extension (West)*** – The program is identical to the IBN, except that it caters to the English-speaking pastors from Ghana and Liberia. It is staffed by the Field Education Coordinator and missionaries serving as District Superintendents for the aforementioned countries.

Extension vs. de-centralized education

According to the Africa Region Sourcebook, **extension education** exists where a central institution has satellite campuses or schools. On the other hand, **de-centralized education** has no central institution. Rather, courses are taught from time-to-time at an arranged location, and administrative records and student grades are kept in an office. Due to a (*) chronic shortage of missionaries in West Africa, such a non-traditional delivery system had to be adopted. Our program borrows its format from the ANSE (East) program which was already functioning when ANSE (West) began in 1997, followed by the de-centralizing of the IBN in 1998.

IBN/ANSE program description

1 Tim. 2:2 – “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable (*) men who will also be qualified to teach other.”

Our motto is: **TEACH THE BEST, LET THEM TEACH THE REST**. The “best” are those who have solid teaching gifts, They can be pastors or laypersons, but must commit to re-teach courses which they themselves take at twice-per-year Teacher Training Conferences, held at a central location.

(*) There are more Christian missionaries working in Kenya alone than in all West African countries combined.

(over)

-PROGRAMS STRENGTHS-

1. EFFECTIVE USE OF PERSONNEL

By far the greatest strength of the de-centralized model is that it requires no multiple Bible Colleges and a minimum of missionary personnel. The de-centralized model uses missionaries and qualified nationals to teach at the

Conferences, then depends upon the gifting of our national leaders to see that the program carries through to the local level.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Through the IBN.ANSE set-up, we have identified those with strong teaching gifts, and even now are doing what we can to see they go to schools like ANU or other equivalent institution, in search of a B. Th, Master's or (hopefully for the very best) the Ph D. It remains to be seen whether these teaching gifts would have ever been uncovered apart from the teaching opportunity these persons were afforded through the de-centralized system.

3. CONFERENCE COURSES TAUGHT AT BACHELOR'S LEVEL

Because missionary personnel with a B. Th., B.A. M.R.E. or M.Div. have usually been available to teach at Conferences, the courses AS TAUGHT AT THE CONFERENCE ITSELF have been equivalent to Bachelor's level work. This is done through class presentations, collateral reading from books loaned from the personal libraries of the teachers, other library books available on-site, and class lectures.

-PROGRAM WEAKNESSES-

- 1. COURSES NOT ALWAYS PASSED ON** – To date, funding has only been available for Conferences, which cost approximately \$2,000 each. This means that when the teachers return to their homes, they often have to “make bricks with no straw.” (Where the District has gotten behind the program, scheduling has happened, and some District funding has been allocated for food, lodging and other expenses associated with the 5-day intensive format). Experience has shown that it is rare for a given center to teach all 8 courses within a year's time.
- 2. CENTER TEACHER QUALITY CAN SUFFER** – Teacher Training Conference participants must be of high caliber. However, where the Church is working in rural and undereducated areas, it is difficult to find qualified teachers. When a center teacher barely passes a course at a Conference, it is predictable that the course won't be passed on back home, or else will be re-transmitted as a pale shadow of what was taught at the

Conference. To avoid this, the Conference instructors usually distribute photocopies of their notes after the final exam, to strengthen the teachers' delivery back in the centers.

3. **LACK OF BOOKS** – Because there are no funds for books in each center, the class consists only of lectures, or else special class presentations by students, i.e. sermon delivery, etc. The activities which were possible at the Conference because of the availability of books are simply not reproducible at the center level. What was a B.Th. level course now becomes Dip. Th. Level.
4. **QUALITY CONTROL** – Closely related to the lack of missionary personnel issue is the difficulty of knowing the quality of what is being dispensed in the various centers. No one missionary has the time to circulate to the 8 countries where we work, and to sit-in on courses. (This can happen to some degree when national D.S.'s go to visit). We are developing student response forms in order to receive feedback from the “grass-roots” on the quality of teaching being done in the various centers.