

THE NEED FOR THE TEACHING OF BIBLICAL STUDIES¹ IN THE RSA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE GIYANI HIGH SCHOOLS²

S B Hlungwani³
I J Henning⁴
G A Lotter⁵

ABSTRACT

It is argued that the teaching of Biblical Studies at schools is relevant to the social life of learners in:

- assisting learners to perform well in other school subjects;
- helping teenagers make better moral decisions in life, and
- building a better society without crime.

It is also shown that the use of the teaching methods and the teaching principles by academically and professionally qualified teachers would improve the standard of teaching of Biblical Studies, especially so in the Giyani schools under the Gazankulu Department of Education (GDE). In an extensive empirical study the following conclusions were drawn.

All respondents (teachers, learners, principals, parents and ministers of Christian religions) agree that Biblical Studies plays a role in the school curriculum as it is instrumental in:

- solving life problems experienced by learners in the society;
- establishing norms whereby learners can judge the situations in which they are involved, and
- enhancing the spiritual and academic growth of learners and young people.

1 In several schools subjects such as Jewish and Islamic Studies are taught as matriculation subjects, but these did not form part of this research.

2 This is a report on research done in 1997.

3 Mr S B Hlungwani, School for Church Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Potchefstroom University for CHE, Potchefstroom 2520.

4 Dr I J Henning, School for Church Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Potchefstroom University for CHE, Potchefstroom 2520.

5 Prof G A Lotter, School for Church Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Potchefstroom University for CHE, Potchefstroom 2520.

OPSOMMING

In die artikel word daarop gewys dat die onderrig van Bybelkunde op skool uiters relevant is vir die sosiale lewe van leerders aangesien dit:

- leerders help om beter te presteer in ander vakke deurdat hulle toegewyd is;
- leerders help om beter moraal gefundeerde beslissings te maak; en
- meehelp om 'n beter, misdaadvrye samelewing te skep.

Daar word verder daarop gewys dat die gebruik van onderrigmetodes en –beginsels deur akademiese- en professioneel gekwalifiseerde onderwysers, die standaard van Bybelkundeonderrig in meer spesifiek die Giyani hoërskole onder die beheer van die destydse Gazankulu Onderwysdepartement, sal verbeter. In 'n intensiewe ondersoek is tot die volgende konklusies gekom:

Alle respondente (onderwysers, leerders, hoofde, ouers en predikante) stem saam dat Bybelkunde 'n belangrike rol te speel het in die skoolkurrikulum aangesien dit bydra tot:

- probleemoplossing deur die leerders in die samelewing;
- die daarstel van norme waarvolgens leerders die lewenssituasie kan beoordeel waarbinne hulle hulself bevind; en
- die geestelike en akademiese groei van leerders en jongmense.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Central Statistical Service, in 1993, 66.7% of the inhabitants of the Republic of South Africa classified themselves as Christians (RSA 1993:9). The following statement is thus disappointing and contradictory:

Teacher Training Colleges in the RSA should produce teachers in engineering, space technology and computers rather than teachers in Biblical Studies (Anon 1995:3).

Such statements and factors such as the educational authorities who are not doing enough to make Biblical Studies⁶ acceptable to learners and teachers; parents who fail to motivate their children to take Biblical Studies; learners who are not interested in the subject; the low regard or status given to the subject as an entrance qualification to the Colleges of Education in the GDE; etc (Tsimane & Henning 1997:13; Hlungwani

6 Biblical Studies should be presented in a *factual* manner, not trying to pre-empt the answer, so as to accommodate learners from other faith convictions who perhaps take Biblical Studies.

1997:14) have caused the phasing out of Biblical Studies in the curriculum of many schools in the RSA. These include some Giyani high schools in the Gazankulu region in the Northern Province (Manganyi 1993:111)⁷ and some schools in the greater Potchefstroom area in the North–West province (Tsimane and Henning 1997:13). This situation is described as “...deplorable in a country which has a large majority of Christians as citizens” (Tsimane & Henning 1997:13).

Notwithstanding the above negative sentiment, a research was undertaken in the Giyani high schools in the Gazankulu region to evaluate the teaching of Biblical Studies as a high school subject, as a source of spiritual development of the learner, and to assess the standard of teacher training in the teaching of Biblical Studies at high school level (Hlungwani 1997:13). From the start it was made clear that this research was done on the subject Biblical Studies and not on the subject Religious Studies or Bible Education.

This led us to the first important question: would education be complete if Biblical Studies as a subject was to be excluded from the spiritual development of the learner?

The second question addressed the standard of teachers' training. The present level of teachers' qualifications in the Giyani high schools did not meet the fundamental requirements for the effective teaching of Biblical Studies (Hlungwani 1997:22).

2. THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

According to McClelland (1988:7), all learning has a religious basis, therefore education should have a Christian character in educating the Christian learner, as religious and spiritual experiences were seen as an essential element in the growth and development of learners and young people (McClelland 1988:66). Makhado (1995:9) said that

this (Christian education) can contribute to building a nation that is thoughtful, creative and flexible and to an education that will enable people to think critically, make independent decisions, be responsible, productive, co-operative (and) principled people with integrity.

7 The Gazankulu Department of Education is now part of the Department of Education of the Northern Province.

Kinati (1995:24) agreed with this statement and stressed that the true Word of God had to be relevant for all Christians. De Wet (1989:22) emphasised that Biblical Studies formed the basis for the personal development of the learner. Kitshoff and Van Wyk (1983:78) maintained that Biblical Studies is a potentially rewarding subject which, if taught correctly by well-equipped and inspiring teachers, will prove to be intellectually stimulating and have formative and enduring value.

3. TRAINING TEACHERS IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

Would teachers be able to teach Biblical Studies effectively without the necessary qualifications? Luthuli (1982:10) and Satekge (1990:304) stated that teachers will be able to teach Biblical studies only if they are well trained. Attention was thus paid to the importance of training teachers in Biblical Studies.

Firstly, in the curriculum design for the training of teachers, the following concepts were discussed, ie the curriculum and the curriculating principles (Hlungwani 1997:17-22).

Secondly, the training and obtaining of qualifications of Biblical Studies teachers under the former Department of Education and Training (DET) and Transvaal Education Department (TED) were compared to teachers under the Gazankulu Department of Education (GDE).

Important issues regarding the proper training of teachers were also identified:

- Biblical Studies should be studied at colleges or universities so as to produce well-educated and trained teachers who would be able to teach the subject properly.
- It was evident that the training period for teachers in Biblical Studies should be extended to more than three years.
- Highly qualified teachers in Biblical Studies (e g BA, BTh, etc.) were essential to solve the unsatisfactory situation of Biblical Studies teaching in the Giyani high schools.
- Biblical Studies has to be taught by teachers who are committed to the teaching profession (Hlungwani 1997:22-30).

4. GIYANI SCHOOLS AS SPECIAL FOCUS

Biblical Studies was introduced in 1982 in the Giyani high schools under the Gazankulu Department of Education (GDE) to replace Religious Education in Standards 9 and 10 (Grade 11 and 12) because this report (1982:44) indicated that learners in Standards 9 and 10 (Grade 11 and 12)

were showing less interest in Religious Education which they considered a non-examination subject (Hlungwani 1997:13-14).

Although Biblical Studies received good attention in the Giyani high schools from 1982 until the end of 1989, various factors have affected the teaching of Biblical Studies, causing less interest in both learners and teachers. The GDE Annual Report (1982:26) revealed the following factors regarding the teaching of the subject:

- Biblical Studies was not marketable compared to the natural sciences.
- A low regard or status was given to the subject as an entrance qualification to the Colleges of Education by the GDE.
- There was a lack of suitably qualified teachers to teach the subject effectively.

The new political dispensation and the new education policy contributed to the phasing out of Biblical Studies in the school curriculum in the Giyani high schools.

A questionnaire was drawn up to interview teachers, learners, principals, parents, and ministers of Christian religion on the issue of Biblical Studies. Fifty Grade 12 learners, twenty teachers, five principals from five high schools, fifteen school parents and ten ministers of Christian religion, made up the sample used in this empirical study. This questionnaire evaluated the attitude of the above respondents towards the teaching of Biblical Studies in the Giyani high schools and not towards the teaching of Religious Studies or Bible Education (Hlungwani 1997:13-14)

5. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondents were questioned on various components regarding the subject Biblical studies such as the attitude towards the subject, the contents of the syllabus, the training of teachers, the teaching methods and the forming of character. Respondents were treated anonymously and had to respond to the statements on a five-point scale. The sample for this study included teachers, grade 12-learners, principals, parents and ministers of Christian religion.

The statements are as follows:

5.1 Attitudes of all respondents towards Biblical Studies.

5.1.1 Biblical Studies is rejected because it is considered a soft option.

5.1.2 Learners reject Biblical Studies because of political, ideological conflicts/backgrounds.

5.1.3 Biblical Studies lessons make learners believe in God.

- 5.1.4 Many teachers see the aims of teaching Biblical Studies as the conversion of learners to Christianity.
 - 5.1.5 Teachers in the Giyani high schools have limited access to Biblical Studies sources (e g material, books, etc.).
 - 5.1.6 Biblical Studies teachers fail to involve learners' interest in the teaching of the subject.
 - 5.1.7 Parents believe that only learners with religious connections (e g Youth Movement, Student Christian Movement, etc.) should enrol for Biblical Studies.
 - 5.1.8 Parents are against Biblical Studies because it is not relevant in the education of their learners.
- 5.2 Contents of Biblical Studies.
- 5.2.1 The image of Biblical Studies could be improved by introducing the subject from Grade 8 onwards.
 - 5.2.2 Biblical Studies teaches learners that Christianity is the only true religion.⁸
 - 5.2.3 The curriculum in Biblical Studies should include more topics that concern the youth (e g sex abuse, ancestor worship, witchcraft, etc.).
 - 5.2.4 Biblical Studies teaching at schools should accommodate other religions (e g Islam, Hinduism, etc.).
 - 5.2.5 Biblical Studies is a content subject dealing with the life of learners.
- 5.3 Training of teachers in Biblical Studies.
- 5.3.1 Biblical Studies teachers should study the subject at teachers' training colleges or at universities.
 - 5.3.2 Teachers' Training Colleges in the RSA should not train teachers in Biblical Studies.
 - 5.3.3 Training period of teachers in Biblical Studies should be at least three years (3 years).
 - 5.3.4 Teachers should receive academic training in Biblical Studies (e g B A, B Th, etc.).
 - 5.3.5 Many principals allocate Biblical Studies teachers not according to their qualification but according to their interest.
- 5.4 Methods of teaching Biblical Studies.
- 5.4.1 Many Biblical Studies teachers do not use the correct teaching method (e g class conversation, the buzz-group method, etc.).

8 The question was put to obtain *honest* responses from the learners.

5.4.2 Didactic principles should be considered in the teaching of Biblical Studies (e.g. starting from the known to the unknown, motivation, self-activity, etc.).

5.4.3 The objectives and aims of Biblical Studies should be stated in a lesson presentation.

5.4.4 Biblical Studies is taught by teachers who are committed to their teaching profession.

5.5 Forming of character.

5.5.1 Biblical Studies is taught to cultivate a good moral character in learners.

5.5.2 Biblical Studies could help teenagers to make better moral decisions in life.

5.5.3 Biblical Studies tends to indoctrinate learners with religious ideas (e.g. to have a good marriage, to live a holy life, etc.).

5.5.4 Ministers of Christian religion are in favour of Biblical Studies because it builds a better society without crime.

5.5.5 Ministers of Christian religion believe that Biblical Studies is a spiritual, emotional subject in the growth and development of the learners.

6. INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS⁹

6.1 Attitudes of all respondents towards Biblical Studies

6.1.1 Biblical Studies is rejected because it is a soft option to be taken.

Of the respondents 20% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 20% remained neutral, 23% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed.

Therefore, Biblical Studies should be restructured by the addition of more relevant life-related content so as to change respondents' attitudes towards the subject.

6.1.2 Learners reject Biblical Studies because of political, ideological conflicts/backgrounds.

Of the respondents 23% strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 27% remained neutral, 20% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

A re-design of the curriculum of Biblical Studies can totally eliminate political, ideological conflicts/backgrounds from Biblical Studies.

⁹ For the purpose of this study, the respondents' responses were taken as a whole to obtain a general impression on this matter.

6.1.3 Biblical Studies lessons make learners believe in God.

Of the respondents 22% strongly agreed, 54% agreed, 6% remained neutral, 14% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed.

Biblical Studies helps learners to find the beliefs and values about God as Creator of all, including mankind. Therefore, because of its relevance to the learners, its removal from the school curriculum could do irreparable damage to society and learners.

6.1.4 Many teachers see the aims of teaching Biblical Studies as the conversion of learners to Christianity.

Of the respondents 8% strongly agreed, 74% agreed, 10% remained neutral, 6% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

The implication is that Biblical Studies should not be removed from the school curriculum because it helps learners to be better Christians.

6.1.5 Teachers in the Giyani high schools have limited access to Biblical Studies sources (e.g. material, books, etc.).

Of the respondents 18% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 8% remained neutral, 32% disagreed and 28% strongly disagreed.

According to the above view, sources in Biblical studies are available in the Giyani high schools — a new approach to presenting the subject is required.

6.1.6 Biblical Studies teachers fail to involve learners' interest in the teaching of the subject

Of the respondents 10% strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 20% remained neutral, 24% disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed.

In view of the above results, teachers should try to involve and keep learners interested during the lesson because active student involvement and participation in a daily lesson could necessarily motivate Biblical Studies in schools.

6.1.7 Parents believe that only learners with religious connections (e.g. Youth Movement, Student Christian Movement, etc.) should enrol for Biblical Studies.

Of the respondents 42% strongly agreed, 33% agreed, 5% remained neutral, 12% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed.

Religious connection such as the Students' Christian Movement have a positive effect on the Christian faith of learners both at school and at home.

6.1.8 Parents are against Biblical Studies because it is not relevant in the education of their learners.

Of the respondents 5% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 15% remained neutral, 42% disagreed and 28% strongly disagreed.

In view of the above results, Biblical Studies should not be phased out in the school curriculum as McClelland (1988:66) states: "All

learning has a religious basis". Therefore a child's education should have a Christian character.

6.2 Contents of Biblical Studies.

6.2.1 The image of Biblical Studies could be improved by introducing the subject from Grade 8 onwards.

Of the respondents 20% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 10% remained neutral, 30% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed.

It may be concluded that the image of Biblical Studies could be improved by introducing the subject from Grade 8 onwards.

6.2.2 Biblical Studies teaches learners that Christianity is the only true religion.¹⁰

Of the respondents 17% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 23% disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed.

More than 50% of the respondents agreed that Christianity is the only true religion. Those who disagreed are perhaps from other faith convictions who had to take the subject as part of the curriculum, and not of their own free will.

6.2.3 The curriculum in Biblical Studies should include more topics that concern the youth (e.g. sex abuse, ancestor worship, witchcraft, etc.)

Of the respondents 25% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 20% remained neutral, 30% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed.

In view of the above, more relevant topics should be included in Biblical Studies to motivate learners to choose Biblical Studies as a subject.

6.2.4 Biblical Studies teaching at schools should accommodate other religions (e.g. Islam, Hinduism, etc.).

Of the respondents 8% strongly agreed, 12% agreed, 4% remained neutral, 64% disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed.

In view of the large percentage of respondents who disagreed, Biblical Studies teaching should not accommodate other religions.

6.2.5 Biblical Studies is a content subject dealing with the life of learners.

Of the respondents 26% strongly agreed, 46% agreed, 2% remained neutral, 18% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed.

Kitshoff and Van Wyk (1983:78) confirm that Biblical Studies assists learners in understanding and evaluating the outer reality as seen from the Bible's point of view. Therefore Biblical Studies

10 Biblical Studies must be presented in a *factual* manner, not trying to pre-empt the answer. The question was put to obtain *honest* responses from the learners.

should not be phased out in the school curriculum because it deals with the life values of learners.

6.3 Training of teachers in Biblical Studies.

6.3.1 Teachers in Biblical Studies should study the subject at teachers' training colleges or at universities.

Of the respondents 30% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 20% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed.

Biblical Studies as a school subject should be studied at colleges or at universities so as to produce well-educated and trained teachers to teach the subject properly.

6.3.2 Teachers' Training Colleges in the RSA should not train teachers in Biblical Studies.

Of the respondents 10% strongly agreed, 4% agreed, 42% remained neutral, 26% disagreed and 18% strongly disagreed.

In view of the above results, it is clear that training colleges in the RSA should train teachers in Biblical Studies.

6.3.3 Training periods of teachers in Biblical Studies should be at least three years (3 years).

Of the respondents 22% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 6% remained neutral, 50% disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed.

It is evident that the training periods of teachers in Biblical Studies should be extended to more than three years in order to produce academically qualified teachers in Biblical Studies.

6.3.4 Teachers should receive academic training in Biblical Studies (e.g. BA, BTh, etc.).

Of the respondents 46% strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 2% remained neutral, 12% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed.

The implication is that highly qualified teachers in Biblical Studies are required to solve the unsatisfactory situation of Biblical Studies teaching in the Giyani high schools.

6.3.5 Many principals allocate Biblical Studies teachers not according to their qualification but according to their interest.

Of the respondents 4% strongly agreed, 6% agreed, 12% remained neutral, 54% disagreed and 24% strongly disagreed.

In view of the above results, it is clear that many principals allocate teachers according to their qualifications, as it should be.

6.4 Methods of teaching Biblical Studies.

6.4.1 Many Biblical Studies teachers do not use the correct teaching method (e.g. class conversation, the buzz-group method, etc.).

Of the respondents 36% strongly agreed, 27% agreed, 7% remained neutral, 23% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed.

The above results, where a large percentage of respondents agreed, revealed that the correct method should be used in teaching Biblical Studies not only to motivate learners' interest in the subject, but also to obtain the best results.

6.4.2 Didactic principles should be considered in the teaching of Biblical Studies (e.g. starting from the known to the unknown, motivation, self-activity, etc.).

Of the respondents 54% strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 18 disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

In view of the above results, it is evident that didactic principles (e.g. motivation, self-activity, etc.) should be promoted in Biblical Studies teaching.

6.4.3 The objectives and aims of Biblical Studies should be stated in a lesson presentation.

Of the respondents 60% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 10% remained neutral and 10% disagreed.

It was overwhelmingly agreed that the objectives and aims of Biblical Studies should be stated in a lesson presentation as this will help to motivate learners to understand the subject and to make it more interesting to them.

6.4.4 Biblical Studies is taught by teachers who are committed to their teaching profession.

Of the respondents 20% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 10% remained neutral, 46% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed.

The main reason for the large percentage of respondents who disagreed, is due to the fact revealed in the GDE Annual Report (1982:26, see par 4 of this article) that teachers do not give of their best in Biblical Studies because they consider it to be a soft option.

6.5 Forming of character.

6.5.1 Biblical Studies is taught to cultivate good moral character in learners.

Of the respondents 28% strongly agreed, 24% agreed, 22% remained neutral, 10% disagreed and 16% strongly disagreed.

The implication is that Biblical Studies in the school curriculum will help learners to develop good moral character, which in turn will create a morally good society free of crime.

6.5.2 Biblical Studies could help teenagers to make better moral decisions in life.

Of the respondents 32% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 8% remained neutral, 18% disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed.

The above results imply that the Biblical Studies syllabus should meet the needs of modern teenagers who come into contact with modern-day problems and other ideologies.

6.5.3 Biblical Studies tends to indoctrinate learners with religious ideas (e.g. to have a good marriage, to live a holy life, etc.).

Of the respondents 36% strongly agreed, 16% agreed, 23% remained neutral, 17% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed.

According to the large percentage of respondents who felt this way, Biblical Studies, more especially in the Giyani high schools, should be included in the school curriculum, because it motivates learners towards leading a good life.

6.5.4 Ministers of Christian religion are in favour of Biblical Studies because it builds a better society without crime.

Of the respondents 70% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, and 12% remained neutral.

88% of the respondents agreed that ministers of Christian religion are in favour of Biblical Studies because it builds a better society without crime.

6.5.5 Ministers of Christian religion believe that Biblical Studies is a spiritual, emotional subject that contributes to the growth and development of the learners.

Of the respondents 54% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 10% remained neutral and 14% disagreed.

In view of the above results, where 74% of the respondents agreed, it is clear that Biblical Studies is seen as a spiritual, emotional and academic subject which contributes to the spiritual growth and development of the learners. The subject should not be phased out in the Giyani high schools because of its spiritual importance for learners and society as a whole.

7. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

Very important results (Hlungwani 1997: 39-47) were identified, namely:

- The image of Biblical Studies could be improved by introducing the subject from Grade 8 onwards.
- Biblical Studies teaches learners that Christianity is the only true religion.
- More relevant topics (e.g. sexual abuse, ancestor worship, witchcraft, etc.) should be included in Biblical Studies to motivate learners in choosing Biblical Studies as a subject.
- Biblical Studies teaching should not accommodate other religions.
- Biblical Studies deals with the life values of learners. Parents must be made aware of the positive influence of Biblical Studies on their learners' lives.

- Biblical Studies teachers need to explore the various Biblical Studies sources so that they can be better prepared to teach the subject.
- Teachers should try to involve and keep learners interested during the lesson because active student involvement and participation in a daily lesson could motivate them towards taking Biblical Studies in schools.
- Biblical Studies should be open to all those learners who are really interested in the subject.
- According to the data (Hlungwani 1997:32-34), all respondents (teachers, learners, principals, school parents and ministers of Christian religions) strongly agree that Biblical Studies has a role to play in:
 - solving life problems;
 - helping learners to make the right decision, and
 - establishing norms whereby learners can judge the situations in which their lives are involved.
 - The following important statement was made: “Biblical Studies has been phased out in some Giyani high schools”, suggesting that this is the result of people’s wishes. The empirical study, however, proved that this was not desirable in the respondents’ opinion, seeing their positive attitudes towards Biblical Studies as a school subject (Hlungwani 1997:32-34).

8. VALUE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

The following important facts (Hlungwani 1997:39-47) were revealed:

- Biblical Studies in the school curriculum would help learners to develop good moral character, and this would in turn create a morally good society free of crime.
- The Biblical Studies syllabus should meet the needs of modern teenagers who come into contact with modern-day problems and other ideologies.
- Biblical Studies should be included in the school curriculum, because it motivates learners towards leading a good life (e.g. to have a good marriage, to live a holy life, etc.).
- Ministers of Christian religion were in favour of Biblical Studies because it helps to build a better society without crime.
- Biblical Studies was seen as a spiritual, emotional and academic subject which contributes to the spiritual growth and development of the learners. It should therefore not be phased out in high schools because of its spiritual importance for learners and society as a whole.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This research (Hlungwani 1997:49-50) revealed that Biblical Studies, as a school subject, is relevant to the social life of learners in:

- Assisting learners to perform well in other subjects through dedication.
- Helping teenagers make better moral decisions in life, and
- Building a better society without crime.

The subject should thus be included in the school curriculum.

Some authors agreed that Biblical Studies plays a part in the changing of society, especially in the promotion of growth and personal development of learners and young people. Because its source is the Bible, Biblical Studies could act as a possible catalyst in the process of reconciliation among South Africans.

The literature study revealed that the potential of Biblical Studies to be an interesting and lively subject for learners depends entirely on well-qualified teachers who are committed and dedicated to their teaching profession.

Recent research recommended that academically and professionally well-qualified teachers are essential for the effective teaching of Biblical Studies.

Thus, education is only complete once Biblical Studies is included in the high school curriculum and the training of teachers enhanced!

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address the above-mentioned problems, the Biblical Studies syllabus needs to be restructured for the effective teaching of Biblical Studies and suited Biblical media (Smith 1990:4).

The Northern Province Department of Education (Giyani high schools included) must pay serious attention to the issue in order to implement a new approach in the teaching of Biblical Studies which deals with the lives of the learners and the communities (De Wet 1989:22, Hlungwani 1997:42).

It is also recommended (Hlungwani 1997:50-51) that the training period for Biblical Studies teachers be extended to four years in order to improve the academic and professional standard of prospective teachers.

It became clear that teacher training facilities are inadequate in the Northern Province (the former Gazankulu Department of Education), and it is therefore recommended that one or two Colleges of Education be estab-

lished and be associated with universities in order to enhance the status of teachers' qualifications.

It is also recommended that the Northern Province introduce in-service training programmes aimed at improving the teaching techniques of Biblical Studies.

The focus of the research in 1997 was confined to the Giyani area under the former Gazankulu Department of Education (GDE). It is recommended that further studies be conducted in other areas to find out whether similar responses could be obtained or not.

More or less the same general results were found in a survey carried out in some schools in the greater Potchefstroom area in the North-West province (Tsimane & Henning 1997:13, 16-17).

In the light of the "New South Africa" concept of a "non-racial, multi-cultural society" the nature of Biblical Studies and its place in the school curriculum should be thoroughly analysed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANON

1995. Country faced with challenges. *Sowetan* 3, Oct 24.

DE WET D R

1989. *Biblical studies teaching: a new perspective*. Pretoria: Academica.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING (DET)

1979. Act no 90 of 1979.

1990. Secondary teacher's diploma structure.

GAZANKULU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (GDE)

1982. Circular no 6/212111 of 1982.

1990. Act No 11 of 1990.

1991. Annual Report, 1991 (GDE1).

HIUNGWANI S B

1997. Evaluation of the teaching of Biblical Studies in the Giyani high schools. Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO (Mini-dissertation, MA)

KINATI G

1994. Hope for Africa and a Christian's task. *Word in Action* 353, Winter.

Hlungwani *et al*

Biblical Studies in Giyani high schools

KITSHOFF, M C & VAN WYK W B

1983. *Method of religious education and Biblical Studies*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

LUTHULI P C

1982. *An introduction to Black-orientated education in South Africa*. Durban: Butterworths.

MANGANYI M J

1993. The Genesis and development of Religious Education as a school subject in Gazankulu. Pretoria: Unisa. (Dissertation, M.Ed.)

MCCLELLAND, V A

1988. *Christian education in a pluralist society*. London: New York.

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA

1993. *Demografiese statistieke*. Pretoria: Sentrale Statistiekdiens.

SMITH, W H

1991. Relevance in the teaching of Bible Education. Johannesburg: RAU. (Dissertation, M Ed)

TSIMANE J P & HENNING I J

1997. Give Biblical Studies a fair chance. *Word in Action* 359, Autumn.