

## **ISB Annual Report 1999**

### **Looking back on 1999: Reflections by the Director, Prof Gerald West**

1999 was another busy year for the ISB. It was also a year of great joy as we prepared for our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and a year of terrible sadness as we mourned for our colleague from PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness), Peter Kerchoff, who was killed in a car accident.

This year has seen a restructuring within the ISB. As we reported in our 1998 Annual Report, the ISB has been working very closely with what used to be called the House of Study for Worker Ministry - a structure established by the churches and NGOs to directly address the needs of workers in the church. The Worker Ministry Project, as it is now called, have always worked with similar methods and commitments to the ISB, and so it makes sense to share resources and experience.

During 1999 we decided to restructure the ISB to include the Worker Ministry Project in a more integrated way. Our new structure can be diagrammed as follows:

[diagram]

Structurally, I am responsible as Director of the ISB for all of the programmes of the ISB, though in practice each of the Co-ordinators has considerable autonomy in co-ordinating the programme that they are responsible for. As in this Annual Report, each of the Co-ordinators will be responsible for reporting on their programme in the Annual Report. It should be pointed out, however, that for 1999 we have not produced one Annual Report for both the old ISB and the Worker Ministry Project. Our financial accounts are still separate and so we felt that it might cause confusion if we presented only one Annual Report. For 1999, therefore, there is an ISB Annual Report (this report) and a Worker Ministry Annual Report, each with their own financial statement. We will continue to work towards a fully integrated Annual Report in 2000 or 2001.

Briefly, the ISB (including the Worker Ministry Project) consists of six projects. The Community and Leadership Development Project is co-ordinated by Rev Malika Sibeko and is responsible for a range of projects which have a focus on community development and

empowerment. The Gender and Women Project is co-ordinated by Ms Phumzile Zondi and is responsible for raising and responding to gender-related issues in the community and church. The particular focus of this programme is women. The Worker Ministry Project is co-ordinated by Mzwandile Nunes and incorporates a series of projects in the areas of economic justice, job creation, industrial mission, unemployment, and globalisation (see separate Annual Report). The Research Project is co-ordinated by Prof Gerald West and continues to emphasise the importance of reflection on praxis. The Community-based Learning Project and the North-South Partnership Project are also co-ordinated by Prof Gerald West; both these Projects have their focus on learning from community-based experiences. Finally, there is the area of Administration, which is co-ordinated by Ms Sanele Khambule, who is responsible for all ISB (including the Worker Ministry Project) administration.

## **Community and Leadership Development Project: Rev Malika Sibeko reports**

### **Introduction**

The marginalised groups in Communities and Churches continue to challenge our understanding of the Biblical texts during the contextual Bible studies that are facilitated by the staff of the ISB. My deep-rooted involvement with different groups within the ISB has challenged my thinking that: *“Theology can only be studied at the University”*. One has continued to be exposed and confronted by local theologies from the communities of the poor, disabled and marginalised. This was also the year marked with international visitors from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany.

The presence of the full-time co-ordinator of the Gender and Women Project enabled my work to have a specific focus, that of community development and leadership. This has been one area where the ISB contributed to the communities and Churches, but due to the lack of staff we were unable to do much work. This year was marked by intense training workshops for both Ministers/Pastors and the lay leaders of ecumenical Churches. One of these training workshops was not a one-off contact, but continues for the whole year.

The ISB has continued to have an enormous network of institutions with which it is linked. This has been important in sharing the resources available.

The facilitation training workshop would not have been successful without the support of the whole staff, including the student workers, student interns and the Graduate assistants. I wish to thank the following people: Gerald West, Phumzile Zondi, Thandeka Tshazi, Ntombifuthi Ntshingela, Gopolang Moloabi, Dombo Sinthumule and Nicole Simopoulos.

The ISB facilitated a series of workshops in different Churches and Communities. Underneath is some of the work done in the course of 1999:

### **Pietermaritzburg Children's Home**

The ISB has been continuously conducting contextual Bible studies with this group for four years. This is a group of children aged between 12 and 16 years, and most are victims of societal ills. At the beginning of each year, the children are given an opportunity to raise issues that relate to their context and experiences, these are dealt with during the Bible study process. The ISB meets with these children once a week to read the Biblical texts from their perspective.

[Picture]

A group of women theologians from Sweden after the contextual Bible study process.

### **The Church of the Province of Southern Africa: Diocese of Umzimvubu**

The ISB was invited a year ago to run a training course for lay leaders of this Diocese. The main aim for this involvement was to train the trainers. This was important for the organizers because it enabled the Diocese to bring together its human resource at one place since their area of operation is too vast. The training workshops were facilitated on monthly bases. Almost +- 100 lay leaders attended the course. Here, the following procedure was followed:

- \* participants were asked to state issues that affect them from their communities so as to relate those with the Biblical texts.
- \* the methodology of the ISB in designing the Bible studies was presented.
- \* the contextual Bible study on terminal illnesses was done.
- \* the lay leaders were asked to run the same contextual Bible study in their respective churches and were also given another text on rape to facilitate in their Churches.
- \* lastly, the participants were expected to do a presentation at the next meeting.

At the end of the course, some participants stated a need to continue with the training and some felt a need to run these training workshops regionally.

[Picture]

Lay leaders presented the Bible study on terminal illness.

### **The Methodist Church of Southern Africa: Thaba-Nchu Circuit**

The Methodist Church Minister invited the ISB to facilitate a workshop on leadership with the lay leaders and another one on Aids and the Bible with young people. This was a three-day workshop.

A number of young people (about 70) from that region attended the workshop on Aids and the Bible. The text read was taken from the Gospel of St. Mark 1:40-45. During the group discussions, the group reflected deeply about the issue of Aids. It was in the light of this theological reflection that they planned to organize more workshops of this kind where AIDS survivors would be invited to share their stories. The Bible study enabled them to realize that

even the issues of Aids can be discussed in the Church. The ISB was invited again to facilitate more workshops.

[Picture]

Young people in plenary session

The ISB designed a contextual Bible study amongst the Methodist lay leaders on the same weekend. Almost 70 people attended the workshop on leadership and the Bible. The group observed a role play on three styles of leadership, after which they made a few comments on the process. In the light of the role play, the participants were asked to read texts from Mark 9:33-35; 10:10-35-37, 41-45. Some of the questions asked were: “What does the Bible say about Jesus’ style of leadership?”, “How do you understand the words - “ lord it over others”, “make their authority felt” and “be served”? “How can we become effective leaders?”. During the evaluation session the group felt that their leadership style had been challenged and they planned for another training workshop on leadership. And my perception is that this is the way forward.

[Picture]

A group of lay leaders reflect together during the group discussion session

### **Uniting Reformed Church: Hammarsdale**

The ISB conducted a two- day workshop with young people and the lay leaders of this Church. In this workshop, there were also visitors from the Dan Church Aid. Reading the Bible with people from another context was enriching for the members of this Church.

The ISB held a Bible study on rape with the young people. The Bible study was an eye opener for young people. Towards the end, the participants committed themselves to organize another workshop. Here, they intended to invite the ISB again, and they also wanted to invite others who are informed on such issues like counselors, social workers, the police, lawyers, doctors and others. And they were expected to share relevant steps to be considered by the rape victims with the group.

[Picture]

Young people in plenary after the group discussions

The workshop at Hammarsdale continued for the second day with the lay leaders and Danish pastors. The Bible study on leadership and facilitation was designed by the ISB facilitators. The Bible study opened up space for the leaders to reflect on their own leadership style. It was

interesting to discover that the Bible study questions also allowed the participants to reflect on their leadership styles beyond the Church environment. They were able to talk about their leadership style at home and in the community.

[Picture]

The group from Denmark participating in discussions

[Picture]

Lay leader presenting a report from the group

### **Methodist Wesley Guild: Bloemfontein**

Almost a hundred young people met with the ISB on Human Rights' Day, the workshop theme was: "Young people's rights in relation to abuse" the text from II Samuel 13:1-22 -*The rape of Tamar* was used to raise the issues pertaining to different types of abuse emerging from the text. The participants were able to identify the following types of abuse: physical abuse (when the brother pushed her out of the house), sexual abuse (when he forced himself on her) and emotional abuse (when Absalom silenced her). This was followed by an input from a representative from the Rape Unit of the South African Police Services and she gave them steps to follow when someone is raped. In the light of this workshop young people felt that the Church is a safe place to talk about such issues. Therefore, they decided to have another meeting where they would discuss other issues that concern them, like AIDS, abortion, pregnancy, date rape and relationships.

[Picture]

Young people involved in group work during the workshop

[Picture]

A representative from the SAPS

### **Gender and Women Project: Ms Phumzile Zondi reports**

#### **Introduction**

This desk was established in response to a suggestion that was made at a Women's workshop which was organized by The ISB in 1996. The women felt that there was a need to employ

someone who can focus on issues which affect women and use the Bible to facilitate transformation in families, churches and communities. Therefore at the beginning of 1999 the coordinator and student workers spent a lot of time introducing this desk to churches and other groups that ISB has worked with in the past.

I would like to thank these student workers, namely Ntombifuthi Ntshingila and Thandeka Tshazi, for their tireless work especially at the beginning of 1999. The Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) and the Midlands Women's Group (MWG), which are two organisations which have been working with women's groups for a long time, were also very helpful in this regard.

There are groups which we worked with on a regular basis and those which were once off. The ongoing projects are Sobantu Old Age Club, Hope Study Project, IDAMWASA, Kenosis and the Widow's Forum. Once off workshops were held at Soweto(Lutheran Church), Nelspruit, Daveyton and a Youth for Christ national camp.

### **Sobantu Old Age Club**

Sobantu is one of the townships around Pietermaritzburg. This Club is made up of pensioners most of whom are women. Their ages range from 55 to 105 . The year 1999 was declared a year of the Aged and we felt it was important for us to contribute towards making their lives better. We meet with this group twice a month.

The following issues which were important to them: What the Bible says on denominationalism, death, ancestors, the role of women in the church, the strict dress codes in our churches, HIV/ Aids and the difference between salvation and faith. For each of these topics we found related texts, which were then discussed using our questions and answer method. The greatest challenge was together deciding on an action plan especially after the new revelations which came out of our method of reading the Bible which was new to the group.

The highlight of working with this group has been their desire to challenge their church leaders who have for a long time imposed their own understanding of the Bible on all their members. We have also discussed the possibility of arranging Bible Studies for young people who have been discouraged from reading the Bible by the narrow readings which are used in their churches.

### **Hope Study Project**

Hope Study project is a Youth For Christ finishing school which takes in young people who have failed matric exams and gives them a second chance. Eighty percent of the student body are women. These students are taught for a year and are also given some life skills. Contextual Bible Studies was part of their life skills programme, this was done weekly. Their perception of the Bible was that it is a book for old people and it does not deal with issues which are important to them. They viewed it as a book that only deals with spiritual matters.

Contextual Bible Studies made them realize that the Bible deals with all aspects of life. Issues

which were important to them were what the Bible says about the role of women in their churches and communities, the strict dress code imposed by churches especially on young people, why ancestors are called demons, relationships and marriage, sexuality and HIV/Aids. Finding relevant texts for these issues was not easy but together we found ways of dealing with them. Some of the young people invited the coordinator to their churches to address young and old people.

### **Idamwasa**

The Interdenominational Midlands Women's Association of South Africa is made up of women from all the churches in the area. They meet once every month and have speakers from different churches each time they meet. Most of these women meet every Thursday in their own churches for prayer and once a month they go to these meetings.

The first few times we met with them, we realized that their messages were not different from those preached by male ministers in their churches. When we introduced our project and spoke about reading the Bible from our perspective as women, they were very suspicious. The first Bible study we did together was on 2 Samuel 13: 1-21. It was very interesting to see how they responded to the questions and also realized that we actually perpetuate violence in our homes by refusing to talk about it and support one another. It was also very clear that women have learnt to divide their lives into two; the spiritual and their reality. This leads to believing that what happens at home has nothing to do with the Bible or God.

This group of middle age to elderly women is still very suspicious and feel the old way of reading the Bible did not challenge them as much as the contextual Bible study. They also fear the possibility of being misled from the "truth" as preached in their churches. It is clear we have to work on this relationship so as to improve the level of trust.

### **Kenosis**

Kenosis is a Lutheran Institution which trains young women as lay ministers. Our contribution to their programme is training them on how to facilitate Contextual Bible Studies. Last year there were five women from different churches. Some of the topics covered were the role of a facilitator, how to formulate questions for a Bible Study session and women and the Bible. The highlight of our meetings was looking at texts which have women as main characters and are either ignored or misinterpreted. This was very clear when we studied the text on the Samaritan woman. She is always seen as an immoral woman and we decided that her many husbands actually stand for the many gods that the Samaritans believed in.

### **Howick Widow's Forum**

This forum was put in place as a response to the fact that widow's are usually discriminated against and are oppressed in different ways. One example of this oppression is the expectation from either the in-laws or the community to wear mourning garments for a year. This garment restricts their lives and it takes away their freedom of movement. They felt it was important to

have a body where they can support one another and also challenge some of the expectations imposed on them.

The ISB women and gender desk was involved right from the beginning and assisted them to launch the organization in November 1999. Our role was through general discussions helping the women to understand the importance of standing together. All the meetings were opened with a short text from the Bible, discussion on what it meant and a word of prayer. The first reading we shared with them was 2 Samuel 21:1-14 and we focused on the role of Rizpah and her silent protest. We also discussed the fact that she was also a widow but that did not make her powerless. We have planned to have at least one workshop per month. The issue that needs our attention is why the churches treat widows like outcasts?

### **Other Workshops**

#### **Soweto Lutheran church women's workshop**

This workshop was organized by an exchange student from the United States of America who was also a Graduate Assistant. The attendance was 90% women. The four men who were present kept on trying to dominate the discussions. This is the reality of working with mixed groups. This workshop was held on a Saturday from 9am - 4pm. We studied the Book of Esther with the main focus being Esther's role in the whole text. This led the women to conclude that it does not matter where one is or how one got there, there is a possibility of lobbying for change.

[picture]

Group discussion at the Lutheran church workshop

#### **Daveyton farm workers' workshop**

The theme of this workshop was "Women Abuse". We began with the first session on Friday evening where we studied 1 Timothy 2:8-15. We looked at how this text has been used to oppress women and then reinterpreted it from our own context. We decided that it can be used to empower women especially after discussing the historical background of the text and the fact that it is a command from the author and not God. The following day we were visited by the Gauteng Deputy Minister of Safety and Security who was both surprised and impressed by the way we read 2 Samuel 13:1-21. She commended that small group of farm labourers for using the most respected book in our communities to lobby for transformation. There was a very emotional moment when women told their stories and we also lit candles which represented each women's life which has been lost through abuse. The group felt it was important for us to come back in March 2000 to check whether they had taken any action in response to the Bible Study.

#### **Nelspruit**

This workshop was held in a small rural area called Jeppes Reef. It was organized by community women from different churches. The aim of this workshop was to fast, pray and discuss issues which affect women. The Bible Study method was not very successful with this group as they are



used to sermons. Almost all the women came from conservative churches and even struggled with the fact that our heads were not covered. We managed to use the opportunities given to us to preach and to spread the message of women empowerment and liberation. The first sermon was preached from John 12:1-8 with the focus being “Who anointed Jesus”. The main thrust was encouraging women to worship in ways which they are comfortable with. The second sermon was on John 4: 1- 30 where we revisited the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. We also read the Book of Esther together but this study turned out to be very difficult since at least 2/3 of the women were illiterate and were very shy. We realized that a lot of work has to be done in rural areas.

### **Youth for Christ Youth Week**

Youth Week is an annual Youth camp which attracts youth from the whole country including other countries like Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Mozambique and Zambia.. The theme was “Generation 21 Leadership” with the aim of training leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We were invited to facilitate Contextual Bible Studies on issues which were raised by young people and also train them on how to use the Contextual Bible Study method. We facilitated workshops on gender awareness, rape and HIV/Aids. Young people from different backgrounds and cultures shared ideas and realised that they are struggling with the same issues. It was also clear that more work has to be done in the area of empowering young women first before exposing them to gender issues in mixed groups. Young people also expressed their appreciation for the fact that we use the Bible to discuss current issues and promised to use the CBS method in their own churches and communities.

[picture]

Group discussion at Youth Week

### **Conclusion**

Using the Bible to empower women has challenged many people in different ministries. We are finding that more people need training in this area. We are also realising that NGO’s who work with women need our support because women often use the Bible to resist change. The School of Theology and ISB offers ministers many skills in this area, but the reality is when they go out to the field they revert to the old way of reading the Bible.

Rural and illiterate women need more time and training. There are too many layers of oppression to deal with and they resist change because of the fear of being rejected by their families, churches and communities. The Women and Gender Desk sees this as an opportunity to empower those who are still on the margins or neglected.

### **Research Project:**

**Prof Gerald West reports**

The ISB continues to emphasise the importance of reflection on praxis. The cycle of Action/Reflection is vital to our work, and we believe that this is one of the reasons why the ISB has managed to adapt to the changing context in South Africa. It is easy in a context like ours with so many demands and needs to become reactive and to emphasise action only. However, without careful reflection on our changing context and on our praxis we cannot be effective. So research is vital to our work.

### **Researching ISB's impact**

During 1999 the ISB has continued with an extensive evaluation of our work in communities where we have worked for a number of years. This research was sponsored by the University of Natal Research and Development Fund. The ISB chose to use a participatory research process with two community-based projects with whom the ISB has worked for some time. Most of the research period was spent working with a cluster of related community-based projects in the informal settlement of Amawoti (in Inanda). The ISB has been working with these projects since the late 1980s. The other community-based project is in Bethlehem, where the ISB has been working for the past four years.

#### ***Amawoti***

The research in Amawoti was conducted by Mr David Ntseng. Ntseng was well placed to do the research as he was a member of the community who was doing postgraduate studies at the University of Natal. After extensive consultation with the projects in Amawoti, a process in which the research was formulated and 'owned' by the community, Ntseng conducted a series of interviews with representatives of the projects and members of the ISB, past and present.

Ntseng found that the ISB's participation in the community-based projects was perceived to be 'empowering' because of the following elements: a process of consultation before participation; beginning participation with the resources of the community; a selective sharing of 'academic' resources; a sharing of academic resources only according to the needs of the group; a praxis in which the central resource, the Bible, became a communal resource rather than the property of a few 'experts'; the identification of real life issues as the focus of the collaboration; the creation of a space for reflection and practice; the creation of a platform for reflection and practice; the development of critical consciousness; a process in which roles continually changed, affirming in practice that every member of the group had resources; a conscious breaking of the barriers between clergy/laity, male/female, and old/young; an 'atmosphere' in which local and external knowledge could be integrated; an ability to interact with text; local control of the project.

The role of the ISB in community development was perceived to be disempowering because of the following elements: the ISB offered human rather than financial resources; the presence of some financial resources, in the form of transport, food, and stationery, generated an expectation of financial resources for community projects; the lack of community representatives in the management of the ISB; questions concerning the identity of the ISB - to what extent was it a community-based organization?; uncertainty as to whether the project work would continue, particularly in its pedagogical dimensions, without some ongoing contact with the ISB.

### ***Bethlehem***

The research in Bethlehem, with a cluster of women's development projects, was more limited, consisting of interviews with three women from the projects. The interviews were conducted by Rev Malika Sibeko, who has worked with project from the beginning as a staff member of the ISB, and Mr Solomuzi Mabuza, a student intern with the ISB.

Substantial time was spent preparing for the interviews, given that the we were committed to the research being participatory. Only when the groups had identified the people to be interviewed and the purpose of the research had been negotiated and owned, did the research proceed.

Sibeko and Mabuza found the participation of the ISB in the projects of the women was perceived to be empowering. The following elements of the ISB's participation were considered to constitute their understanding of 'empowering': the development of leadership skills among ordinary people; the foregrounding of women's contributions and resources as women; the problematizing of culture; the opinions of all participants were valued; the asking of questions was encouraged; the presence of local knowledge was assumed; the provision of space and a place for the recognition of solidarity and common experience; the vernacular as the medium of participation; the transference of skills and resources from one area of concern to another; a pedagogical process that moved from the know to the unknown; the practice of new skills; resources with which to engage taboo issues; an action plan as part of the process; the integration of local knowledge with new knowledge; a confidence to take these elements into other contexts without the assistance of the ISB.

Those interviewed did not indicate any elements of the ISB's participation that were disempowering, though the distance between the ISB's office (in Pietermaritzburg) and Bethlehem was considered a hindrance to ongoing collaboration.

### ***General comments***

The research process has generated a considerable body of data which requires more careful analysis. However, even a cursory analysis demonstrates that there are important elements in the participation of the ISB in community development that are perceived to be empowering. Human development, with particular emphasis on the theological/ideological and pedagogical dimensions of human development, is perceived to be facilitated in an interface between socially engaged intellectuals and local organized communities of the poor and marginalized. While the research has helped to clarify the broad contours of this interface and the elements that constitute it, more reflection is required. This research project has provided important impetus to the task.

### ***Community-Academy partnerships***

A partnership between projects of the poor and marginalized in particular local communities and socially engaged intellectuals is constitutive of the ISB. The research undertaken has strengthened these partnerships because the focus of the research has been community perceptions of the role of the ISB. Local communities are seldom asked to evaluate the participation of outside agencies, and even if they are there is seldom an ongoing relationship that

would benefit from the evaluation. In the case of the ISB the local projects expect to see the impact of their evaluations on the work of the ISB. The ISB has been asked in both cases to come back to the communities with a response to their participation in the research. We will be discussing the research in a day long workshop at the beginning of 2000.

One pitfall of our participation in local communities of the poor and marginalized has to do with a lack of clarity on the actual resources the ISB has. Because the ISB has salaried staff, access to motor vehicles, funding for workshops etc an expectation has arisen that the ISB can offer financial resources to a particular project. This research has made us especially conscious of such expectations. Consequently, on receiving an invitation to participate in a local community project it is now ISB policy to spend the first series of workshops in the clarification of expectations. Because financial resources are so important to community-based projects the ISB has also made a conscious decision to link local projects with whom we work to funding organizations directly.

### **Researching the Contextual Bible Study method**

Over the last ten years the ISB has been involved in research on the role of the Bible in matters of survival, liberation and life in South Africa. In 1999 I published a new book which reflects on the ten years of ISB's work with the Bible in poor and marginalized communities. The book offers a detailed discussion of theoretical and practical issues to do with role of the Bible in the South African context. The book is *The Academy of the Poor: Towards a Dialogical Reading of the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). The book is dedicated to the staff and supporters of the ISB.

### **Community-based Learning Project: Prof Gerald West reports**

For a number of years now the ISB has been involved in providing opportunities for theological students from the School of Theology at the University of Natal to participate in community-based learning. We believe that this is an important element in the formation of a new generation of church leaders in South Africa as it offers alternative models of leadership and gives students a deep sense of what they can learn from local communities.

### **Biblical Studies 210**

Every student who studies theology at the University of Natal is required to do this course in biblical studies. The focus of the course is "Text, Interpretation, and Culture". As a part of this course, every student is required to participate in a community-based learning experience coordinated by the ISB. This year students participated in the Worker Sunday Campaign of the Worker Ministry Project. Students worked closely with local churches in planning, preparing, and then participating in a Sunday service where the focus was on issues of workers and unemployment. Students submitted a detailed report on their experience and this report was assessed. These reports also provide a valuable resource for the ongoing work of the ISB.

### **Student Interns**

Each year the ISB employs a number of student interns. Interns work closely with ISB staff for three hours a week and receive some funding towards their studies. Interns play an important role in the work of the ISB and have considerable opportunity to develop their gifts and skills. The internship programme provides students with many opportunities for community-based learning as they participate in all the activities of the ISB.

### **Student Workers**

In 1998 the ISB initiated a new community-based learning project. The ISB identifies students with a background in community-based work and with academic potential and employs them as Student Workers. The ISB Student Worker project has two related emphases. The first emphasis is *capacity building*. Here the focus is to train students from poor and marginalized communities who have a history of involvement in their local communities and churches and who will return to their local communities and churches after the completion of their theological education. Most students who complete a theological degree are not able to take up community-based positions because they have to find jobs that will pay enough to cover their study loans. The ISB has therefore implemented a Student Worker project where selected students receive a bursary to cover their academic fees and an allowance to cover modest living expenses (food and accommodation). In return the Student Workers work for the ISB for twelve hours a week. During these twelve hours the students participate fully in the life and work of the ISB and in so doing develop a range of important skills and resources. Student Workers are also assisted in their academic work by ISB staff. The work of the ISB also benefits from the programme because of the additional resources that Student Workers bring to the ISB.

The second emphasis of the Student Worker project is *partnership building*. If the ISB receives funds from a donor partner for the Student Worker project, a portion of this funding will be used to enable a Student Worker to visit the donor organization for a period of one month after the completion of their degree. Such visits will deepen the partnership between the ISB and donors and facilitate North-South dialogue and exchange.

We have already had reports from churches and community-based organisations who have employed Student Workers after the completion of their theological training; these reports made it clear that this form of community-based learning makes a substantial contribution to the formation of the students.

### **North-South Partnerships: Prof Gerald West reports**

The ISB is deeply committed to forming partnerships with organisations from the North. We already have longstanding partnerships with churches and organisations in Norway (through Norwegian Church Aid), Germany (through Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland) and Scotland (through the Contextual Bible Study network).

This year we extended our partnerships through numerous visitors who came to spend time with the ISB. In particular, we hosted a group of 16 Danish pastors co-sponsored by Dan Church Aid and the Posteducational Training Institute for Pastors of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark. It was a very successful visit and included participation in local churches, an ISB workshop in a local church, and extensive discussion and reflection on the ISB's methodology.

## **Funding**

We can only report what we have said before, the ISB is most fortunate to have stable funding from Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland, Norwegian Church Aid, and the Church and Community Leadership Trust. In times such as these with shrinking resources we are most grateful for their faithful support. We hope that our relationships with our partners will deepen and there will be a real sense of sharing a common vision as we continue to work together. The ISB is doing what it can to bring in additional funding. For example, we are asking visitors from more wealthy contexts who spend considerable time visiting us to contribute to the work of the ISB.

## **Looking ahead to 2000**

The year 2000 is a special year for the ISB and the Worker Ministry Project: it is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the two organisations! We plan to hold a joint celebration in which we will invite those who have worked with us over the past ten years to join us to celebrate and reflect.