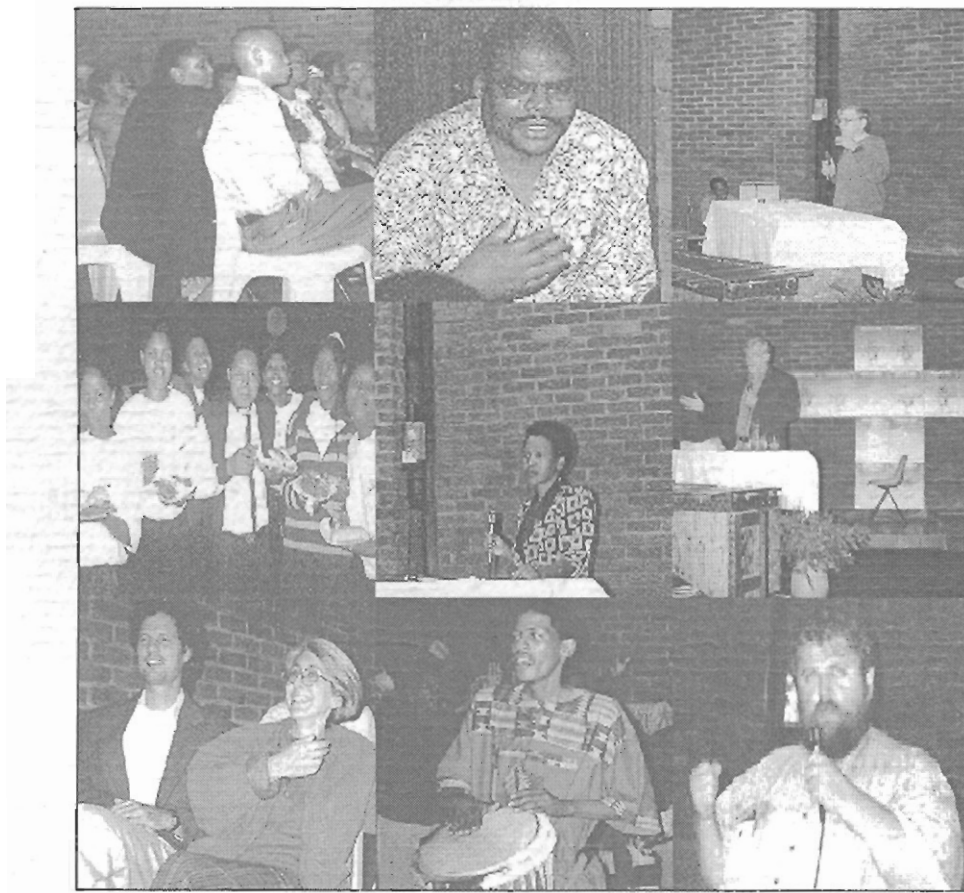


**INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE
AND
THE HOUSE OF STUDIES FOR WORKER MINISTRY
(THE WORKER MINISTRY PROJECT)**



**THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
AND EVALUATION**

April 2000

Word of Thanks to Sponsors!

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We dedicate this Tenth Anniversary Report to our comrade and fellow worker in Christ, Phambili ka Ntloko, who was present with us during the Tenth Anniversary celebrations and who spoke powerfully and prophetically to us, both publicly and privately. He is no longer with us, but his words and memory will continue to sustain and challenge us.

Rev Phambili ka Ntloko



The Tenth Anniversary celebrations of the Institute for the Study of the Bible and the House of Studies for Worker Ministry took place over three days; what follows is what was spoken over these three days. We are grateful to all those who assisted with translation thereby enabling all to speak in their own languages.

Introduction

Ten years is a long time, particularly in South Africa. So much has happened in our country in the past ten years. The Institute for the Study of the Bible and the House of Studies for Worker Ministry have been a part of this ten year history. Each of these organisations has played a role on the changes that have taken place over the past ten years. Each of these organisations continues to work for further transformation in our country. However, we no longer work as two separate organisations; we now work together as one organisation.

Three years ago the Institute for the Study of the Bible and the House of Studies for Worker Ministry began to work closely together and gradually we have become one organisation. In our present structure we have tried to be faithful to the visions and people who founded each of these organisations, but we are also committed to sharing our visions and resources as we become one organisation.

As we were becoming one organisation we believed it was important for us to remember our roots and to reflect on our histories, so that we could go forward into the future with a clear sense of the foundations that had been laid. We therefore decided to celebrate the tenth anniversary of both organisations, the Institute for the Study of the Bible and the House of Studies for Worker Ministry, by calling together all those with whom we have worked over the past ten years and asking them to address us with memories and challenges. This Tenth Anniversary Report is a narrative account of what took place over three days. We have not edited it; we simply record what people said (though we have translated all the contributions into English).

We believe that this Tenth Anniversary Report is an important document. It captures a part of our history and sets before us challenges. We are deeply grateful to all those who were able to attend and who shared their thoughts and words with us. We also thank those who were not able to be with us, but who sent messages of greetings and support.

Friday evening, 31 May 2000

Welcome

Prof Neville Richardson, Head of the School of Theology, University of Natal

It is a great honour for me to be here and to be given the opportunity to welcome you on behalf of the School of Theology. It is also a great honour for me to be the head of the School of Theology. I am standing in the shoes that are bigger than my size. The first shoes are those of Prof Wittenburg, the great ancestor. I really think we must recognise that he is the one who had the original vision of the School of Theology in the early '80's. It was against all kinds of odds including petitions from the good people of Scottsville who did not want such a "dreadful thing" as mixed race residences in Scottsville. He fought until the School of Theology was established. It was also his vision to have an ISB. Amongst us there is also a second head of the School of Theology, Prof Jim Cochrane who has relocated to Cape Town. Welcome Jim, it is great to have you here.

The challenge that we are facing now is in the form of the question and that is: "Where are we headed in this new millennium?" We are looking forward with questions and a vision. This is where we stand tonight. These have been very tough times in theological education in Southern Africa, unthinkable things have happened, such as great institutions closing up. Rhodes University, Faculty of Theology, which was the place we looked up to before we had our School of Theology, is now closed. It is very sad. We also suffered locally when Federal Theological Seminary (Fedsem) was closed. It was a tragedy for the whole of Ecumenical theological education in Africa. Each time a theological institution takes a blow, we, who are still in it, have a greater responsibility to work and fight harder. That is why I think that what we are celebrating tonight is so important. What makes the School of Theology carry on when other institutions are dying? I think the answer to that is the difference that the School of Theology has, it is what I inherited from the heads of the School before me.

I think the key word is contextualisation, that theology does not belong in ivory tower but on the ground with the people and their pain and problems. However, being at the university makes this kind of thing difficult because the university has rules and regulations. I think the ISB project has helped in keeping the contextualisation commitment alive. It is the project that we are celebrating that has helped us and saved the School of Theology from just being another ivory tower. It is ISB that keeps reminding us of what contextualisation means.

It pulls ahead sometimes painfully toward a contextualised future. So, thank you ISB for doing that for the School of Theology because I think it is absolutely crucial. The relationship between ISB and the School of Theology is an interesting one. There is a creative tension, as the project grows stronger. We are a family and as families sometimes have problems, so have we. It is not always plain sailing. We sometimes have differences and struggles. As the head of the School of Theology, I would always make that point that we value tremendously the creative input of ISB. I would like to think that the School of Theology is also beneficial for the ISB because we provide a helpful base. ISB/Worker Ministry is with us in bigger and better ways.

We look back on ten years behind us and we celebrate. We look ahead to at least another ten years and beyond. What will those ten years hold for School of Theology and for ISB? Perhaps we will be here in ten years time and we will be celebrating even more. Let us see and let us go ahead in faith and commitment. Congratulations to ISB/Worker Ministry and have every blessing for the future.

Introduction to the Current Work of the ISB (including the Worker Ministry Project)
Prof Gerald West, Director of the ISB



We thought that tonight we would take this opportunity for those of us who are working with ISB to share something with you of what the ISB is doing at the moment. The main purpose for our celebration is for us to hear from you. We want to hear about your experience with the ISB and we want you to give us direction for the future. However, we thought it would be helpful for many of you and even for our ancestors to hear where we are now. Tomorrow we will hear from the ancestors and from you.

I will say a bit about our work and then I will introduce the staff and have them tell you about the work that they are doing. I hope that by the end of this evening before the celebrations, you will have a good idea of all the things that make up the work of the ISB. The ISB has seven main areas of work.

The first area is community and leadership development. The person who co-ordinates that work is Rev Malika Sibeko. The second area is gender and women issues. The person who co-ordinates this is Ms Phumzile Zondi. The third area is the Worker Ministry Project and Mr Mzwandile Nunes is the co-ordinator. Each of these people will come and tell us about the work that they do because their work is most important in ISB work. We have four other areas of work. They are research, community based learning, North -South partnerships and administration. I am responsible for some of these areas and so I will say something about them. Sanele Mngadi is the one who does administration that keeps the organisation going.

I will say brief words about my areas of work. I think one of the strengths of ISB in the past ten years has been our action/reflection model that we use. We work and try to understand the work, that helps to us to change the way that we work. This process is a very important aspect in our work. We call this process research. I think the reason that ISB is still alive while other similar organisations have dissolved is because we reflect on the work that we have done. We have not done this alone but we have done it with you, which means that you have played a role in the research component of the ISB.

I think that ISB has also made a contribution to biblical scholars both nationally on the continent and internationally. I think that the work that ISB has done over the last ten years and the reflection we have done have made a contribution to biblical scholars. We have pushed the boundaries of what it

means to read the Bible. This area of research is an area that not everybody sees, but I think it is very important in the life of ISB. The second area I want to talk about is the community-based learning. This is one of the areas that has grown the most in the past ten years. The ISB is located at the university, but this location has been at times ambiguous. It has not been clear to the ISB whether to be based in the community or be based in the university. Years ago we had a meeting with the members of the community like yourselves and we asked the groups to report on their work with the ISB. When we were about to close the meeting, one community member asked about what we are doing to change the School of Theology. Since then ISB has been able to do something. Students from the School of Theology have a biblical study module that involves ISB work. This is very important for students who study theology and end up being your ministers. These ministers are now being shaped not only by the university but also by the community through the presence of ISB in their study. A certain few students are fortunate enough to spend much more time with the ISB. The ISB has interns and they are students who work for the ISB for three hours a week. They receive money that goes towards their studies. ISB also has student workers who work for the ISB for twelve hours a week. They have their fees paid and they are given a living allowance by ISB. They also get a university credit for a whole semester course through the work of the ISB. This year ISB has started an ISB semester program where students from other parts of Africa would be sent to come and work with ISB for a semester.

Finally, I would like to talk about the North-South relationships, relationships between the rich and the poor part of the world. Africa has been expected to learn from the north. We have had missionaries and colonialists. Our libraries are filled with their books. There has been a change because people from the North are now coming to learn from the ISB. They are coming to be involved with the community here and to learn about what God is saying to Africa and how we read the Bible. Some of you have met and contributed to their lives. I now call upon Rev. Sibeko. Thank you.

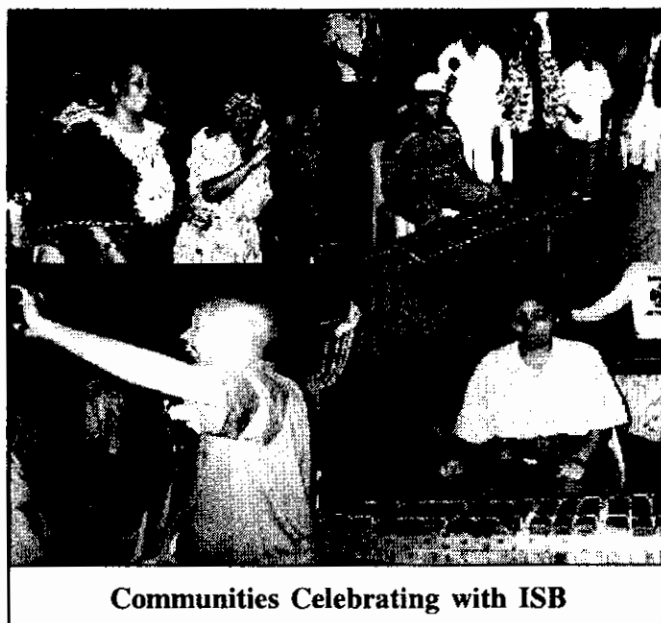
Community Development and Leadership Training Programme

Rev. Malika Sibeko, Programme Co-ordinator

Thank you. Talking after Gerald who is so organised, one just wonders what to say. He is steady and now I am going to adopt the style. What is happening is that from last year we started to have two co-ordinators within the old ISB projects. One co-ordinates the community development and leadership project the other co-ordinates the gender desk. I think it is important to speak about the history of co-ordinators since it is a day of celebration. When one started as an intern at ISB, there were three staff members in ISB. It was very clear that the load of work was unbalanced. We put into practice the issues of democracy. Gerald dealt with issues very democratically and I want to acknowledge this. As we know, in the workplace there are issues of superiority in terms of gender and academic achievements. We dealt with that very effectively.

I am the co-ordinator of community development and leadership now. My areas are to develop leadership within communities and churches. We realised that it is important for us to train people so that they can

be independent of us when it comes to Bible study. I now have a colleague who helps me make sure that this is happening. The other area I work with is to help communities design contextual Bible studies. I also introduce different ways of reading the Bible. I have learnt that it is difficult to teach people to read the biblical text in front of the text and behind the text. I have learnt to make illustrations instead, like to know a person is to know who that person is and the context they live in; then I can talk about reading from behind. Some people just want to know about the context and the text. I then tell people that these are just different ways of reading. So this is my work. There is the community of the disabled in Qwaqwa that is still getting organised for us to do Bible studies with them. The other project I am involved with is the Diocese of Umzimvubu. I also work with a children's home at Hilltops. I am always challenged when I read with these kids. Some have a problem with seeing God as the father since their earthly fathers are abusive. All the projects I work with are unique and they challenge me differently. I am transformed all the time. We still avail ourselves to do Bible study in projects beyond KZN. And we are now celebrating and anticipating to dance to Marimba. Thank you.



Communities Celebrating with ISB

[After these introductory remarks, a representative from an ISB project who was unable to stay for the whole weekend spoke.]

Umzimvubu Diocese

Rev Motsa, Representative



We want to say we want to say that we are grateful to the people of ISB. We are their products. They have helped us. When they first came to our diocese, which is big and predominant of male clergy, we were shocked that Rev Sibeko is a woman. She had come to introduce a Bible study in our diocese. Some of us could not take that a lady would be facilitating us, but in the process we began to accept them both in our diocese and our hearts. What was interesting is that they were bold, strong and they knew their work. Bear in mind that they were talking to us ministers who are also theologians like them. I want to say that they did very well considering that we were sceptical, including myself. The Diocese of Umzimvubu is now on the move with ISB Bible study. They workshopped all the clergy of Umzimvubu including our bishop. They are now doing workshops with all thirty of our parishes. We now expect them to come to our regions.

As the co-ordinator of the Umzimvubu projects, I am happy to say that the parishes are doing well in following the steps of ISB. Tomorrow we have a big archdeaconry conference, there will be a Bible study session whereby those trained by ISB will facilitate. We are very pleased to be associated with ISB, our eyes are opened and we are empowered. ISB should carry on with the good work that they are doing. The whole world wants to hear the good news. As a priest I never thought that rape was something in the Bible, but I discovered that through ISB. Some of us misquoted the Bible to shut women from speaking in church meetings. ISB has been very good in bringing up these issues. Congratulations ISB and may God bless you.

[Another of the ISB's Co-ordinators now introduced her programme.]

Women and Gender Programme

Ms Phumzile Zondi, Programme Co-ordinator

Gerald and Malika have covered most of the things we do in communities. One of the commitments of ISB is to work with the marginalised. Women are one of those people who have been marginalised. As we saw in the role-play that we have just done, the Bible has been misinterpreted to oppress and sideline them. They have been told that they don't have a special role to play in our churches. My area of work is with women's groups and we read the Bible. We emphasise issues that are important to us as women. We create a safe environment for women to talk about the hidden transcript, as Gerald would say. In this environment they talk about things that they would not normally talk about. We use

the Bible as a tool to fight for transformation. We had an argument in one of my classes when men felt uncomfortable with the word fight. The Bible uses this word and we will continue to use it as tool to challenge dominant theologies. So I will now call upon the groups that we work with but before that, I want to make it clear that we do not provide answers but we use questions to discuss issues with the communities. We have representatives from Sobantu Old Age Club and from Nxamalala who would share with us about their experience of working with ISB. Kenosis is also here; it is a Lutheran project that trains young women and this year they have been joined by one man who is constantly challenged by women. I hand it over to them. Thank you.

[Another community project represented then spoke. Solomuzi Mabuza has provided this and the following translation.]

Sobantu Old Age Club
Ms Koloane, Representative

The mother here would like to thank ISB for coming to do Bible studies with them. They feel privileged that they have been chosen by ISB. They feel ISB has opened their eyes to new ways of reading the Bible. Through ISB they have learnt to accept each other regardless of denominations. ISB has helped them to see that they all worship one God which has nothing to do with what church they attend. It has helped begin to ask questions about unclear biblical texts and to find answers for themselves. She wishes that there will be unity in our country and that ISB would go forward. She feels that ISB still has a lot work to do. In short this is what she is saying.

Nxamalala Group
Ms Zulu, Representative

Our representative is from a group that has been working with Rev Bev Haddad for the past three years. Phumzile is taking over now that Rev Haddad is leaving. She says that Phumzile is following on the footsteps of Bev, which makes the group happy. She feels that Bev has helped a lot in understanding the Bible together with social issues. One of the things that she has mentioned is that they did not know much about Aids and because of Bev, they have been able to understand what is involved in such issues. Through her help they have been able to independently teach others about the Bible. Bev has helped discuss things that are avoided by their ministers. She would like to thank you Bev.

Kenosis Community
Ms Xolelwa Mshubeki, Student Representative

Firstly, I would like to thank ISB for inviting us to the celebration. On behalf of the Kenosis Community students, I am going to talk about how we view contextual Bible study as it is one of our course in our studies. We have found that it has helped us study biblical texts that are not read in our churches like

the story of Tamar, which is about rape. We have also learnt skills of facilitating workshops. We can now compare our lives today with the life of older days. We have learnt also to cope with different kinds of people. I would like to conclude by saying I hope you have heard our views as Kenosis students. Thank you.

[The Co-ordinator of the Worker Ministry Project then introduced the various programmes of this Project.]

Worker Ministry Project

Mr Mzwandle Nunes, Project Co-ordinator



When I was growing up in Cape Town, I used to walk down Parliament Street; I would come to a very large tree which was called the slave tree. I was told that it was a place where slaves were taken, they would be stripped naked, tied to the tree and whipped. Those were the slaves who refused to work from sunrise to sunset in the fields of Dutch East India Company. As I grew up I did some research on what was really happening. I discovered that the building that we called the cultural history museum was the slave lodge in those days. A hundred and seventy slaves were housed in one room that was not much bigger than this one. I also discovered that twenty of those slaves died every year

from malnutrition and overwork.

Things got so bad that when the district surgeon of the Dutch East India company came to inspect, he ordered the management to increase the food for the slaves because lack of food was the direct cause of their death. I learnt how the Dutch East India Company bought people from the gold coast, from Ghana, Angola and Mozambique as slaves to Madagascar. They were then brought to Cape Town together with the ones from Indonesia. In Adderly Street, just opposite from where I used to work for South African Airways, people were auctioned off to the slave owners. Husbands were separated from wives and children from parents.

The reality of slavery has put its imprint on the relationships of workers and employers. Slavery was abolished in 1834, but wage slavery continues to today. In the 1960's workers' organisations were smashed and trade union leaders were arrested. In 1973 workers rose up again. It was a time of strikes in the country. Thirty thousand people from the textile industry went on strike in Durban.

Our project is about that history of workers in South Africa. Ten years ago people from the church got together and began to ask themselves questions about the relationship between the church and workers. When I run classes, I ask people to tell me if in all of the Sundays that attend the church, they heard sermons on issues that are work related. Unfortunately very few people say that they have. One of the very important people who facilitated the process of church and work is Jim Cochrane. Our project started when he and others got together to talk about the lack of any focus on workers in theological training.

I would just like to salute a few people. Two people will be coming here from Johannesburg. The first person is Marie Ndungane who spent many years in exile in Tanzania. She worked with the Worker Ministry as the administrator. She also worked with us in the community of Mpophomeni where we ran a course for ministers. The second person is Rev Sikhosiphi Mgoza who played a very important role in this project, particularly in inventing theological language for the kind of issues that we address when dealing with church and work. My talk would be incomplete if I did not mention a very important event that took place in Mpophomeni in 1985 where workers of BTR Sarmcol factory were dismissed from their jobs for demanding union recognition. They waged a battle that lasted more than ten years to get their labour rights. Their case went to the Supreme Court twice and eventually two years ago, they won. The company had to compensate those workers. Some of the workers were tear-gassed, detained and others died. Baba Zondi who is amongst is one of the workers who were involved in the strike.

It was through him that we were inspired to do what we are doing now. The farm next door to us as we meet here at Red Acres was given to the workers to grow produce after being dismissed. It is a job creation project that sustains the workers. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Baba Dladla who is part of the original group of ministers we worked with. I would like to hand over to Sbusiso to talk about the programme of the Worker Ministry Project.

Economic Justice Programme

Rev Sbusiso Gwala, Programme Co-ordinator

I am working with the Worker Ministry Project. Fifty percent of my time is to work with the unemployed youth in KwaZulu Natal. We all realise that about fifty percent of pupils who leave school do not get employed. So we work with those people, among other things we look at economic empowerment. We look at how best they can empower themselves. We know that such things do not go far, but at least they keep the youth busy and away from crime. It is not easy starting projects, for instance you can start a candle making project and two months later ESKOM puts electricity in the area which blows up the attempt. Nevertheless we encourage the youth to deal with economic empowerment issues. We work with this youth within a movement because we think that if we organise them within a movement, they would be productive. It is within the Young Christian Workers that we work with them. This way there is more organisation and we know that they will continue to attend. They look at their situation critically, using the Bible. Some of them never go to church, but the way we look at the Bible makes them understand what we are talking about. We attempt to make better sense than the way that the Bible is used in the churches. They use a method called See, Judge and Act. This is effective to the youth because normally they see and act without judging. So we concentrate on the judging component because it brings reality to them.

We also deal with economic justice issues and we use the Bible to deal with such issues. This empowers them to make informed decisions. We deal with worker issues in the form of the Worker Sunday Campaign. We encourage churches to dedicate one Sunday a year to deal with worker issues. Lastly we also teach student ministers to deal with the issues of worker. This is in the nutshell of what I do. Thank you.

Economic Justice Programme

Mr Lunga Manci, Student Worker

My responsibility is organising the unemployed youth. My focus area is Tugela Mzinyathi Region, also known as Ladysmith. I am launching the YCW (Young Christian Workers). I am also involved in the project called economic empowerment in Mooi River where most of the textile industries have been shut down. Most of the people there are unemployed. We are trying to help them come up with projects that they think can bring in income for them. There are two groups under YCW who are doing something for themselves. One group is into arts and crafts, and the other has a music project. I am in the process of co-ordinating these groups and securing training for those in arts and crafts. Thank you.

Job Creation Programme

Mr Chris Mbude, Programme Co-ordinator



I am mainly working on two projects in the ISB Worker Ministry. One is job creation for people who are living with Aids. Most people find it easy to only pray for these people and gossip about them later. What we are looking at is to make sure that there is something that they can do to restore their dignity. The other project is the music project where we have collected people from the job creation project who play Marimbas and people from Mooi River where Lunga is working, to make music that is relevant to people. We are trying to change the way we are singing in our churches. Thank you.

[After closing prayer, the celebrations continued into the night!]

Saturday, 1 April 2000

Devotion: the Story of Three Servants (Matthew 25: 14-30)

Rev S. Gwala

There are a few things that I would like to mention about the passage I have just read. There are four characters here, three men and their master. Jesus is narrating a story to us. The master is going somewhere else and he gives three men talents to go and multiply them for him as he is going away. When he comes back, he expects interest with the talents. So he gives five, two and one talent respectively to the three men. The first man with five talents went away to multiply it by two. The servant who had two talents went away to multiply it by two. The third man hides the talent. When the master comes back, the two faithful servants come and give the master the talents, the one gave ten and the other four. The last one says, "I was afraid."

We are confronted with the situation here of people who know their masters' ways. They know that their master is a very shrewd businessman. When he buys something for a rand, he sells it for two rands, and he has trained them. They have been trained to do that. So, he gives them talents expecting them to do as they have been trained. I happen to live in Maritzburg about six kilometers from town. Each time when I go to work, I pass the marketplace. I see business people, some shrewd and some ethical. What is happening in the market today is that everybody wants profit. Everybody wants to double their money, hence squeezes money out of the consumers. You open the *Sunday Times* and you find the consumer complaining because people want to squeeze money out of other people. This is the situation we find here. That is the economy we live under. The economy that wants people to double their profit.

This one man in the text rebels against the system of the master. He says "I was afraid, and then I hid the talent, because I know your ways." This man knows the ways of his master and he does not want to accept them. He is basically saying, "I know you reap where you did not sow. You gather where you did not scatter. It is an evil system." Any system that allows someone to reap where he did not sow is evil. So we need men and women who are going to rebel against the system and say, "we are afraid." We need men and women in our parliaments who are going to say, "this has benefits but we are not going to follow the trend because we are afraid." We have globalisation and everybody wants to make everybody believe that there is no alternative. We believe there are alternatives, like this man, he rebelled against the system. I have read this verse before and I actually remember my Sunday school teachers tended to see the man with ten talents as the best man. I am sure most of us have heard from our Sunday school teachers, telling us that we should go and multiply our talents. I just decided to look at it from the different point of view, a view of the man who was afraid.

He was afraid of the ways of the evil master, and decided not to adopt this system. Rebelling comes with some problems. The country may face problems, the citizens may face problems, but we do need to come to the time where we will rebel against the system that makes people go hungry when everybody has enough to throw in the dustbin. We need to say no to that system and say, because we are afraid, we're doing away with it. There will be consequences that lead us to contemplate because we are afraid. May God bless you as you join me in this crusade of saying, we are afraid. It is important to do something about the situation. May God bless you as you made this conscious decision this morning. Thank you.

Let us pray: Father we thank you for your word. We thank you for the people here. We thank you for the Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences from the University of Natal who is with us today. We thank you for the Head of School who is with us here today. From their busy schedules, they have set time apart to be with people of the communities that the university is serving. We thank you for the community you have given unto us that we can change their lives. We could be instruments to do something in their lives. Thank you for ISB that you created ten years ago, and we believe dear God, it has a prophetic voice. We thank you, oh Lord, for each and every person who is here. May their being here be made fruitful. May they contribute meaningfully to the discussions, and as they do so, help them, dear Lord to make new decisions.

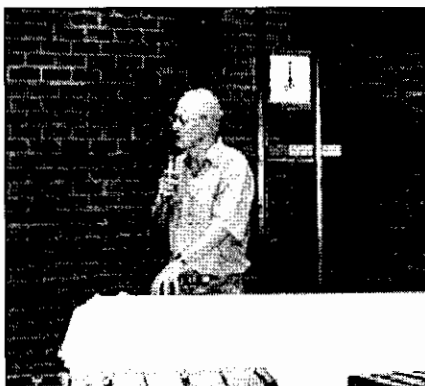
May they take new resolutions as they go out to change their communities. We thank you God for everything that is going to happen from now on until tomorrow. We thank you for the people who have just boarded aeroplanes who are coming here. We believe dear Lord that you will be with them until they get here. Be with us all as we fellowship and as we get to know each another. In the name of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Welcome to Prof Ron Nicholson, Dean of Human Sciences Faculty
Prof Neville Richardson, Head of School of Theology**

I would like to welcome Prof Nicholson who is with us this morning. Prof Nicholson is a Dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences, which is a very large faculty of our university. Roughly speaking our university here has only two faculties, one of Science and one of Human Sciences. Effectively Prof Nicholson is the academic head of half of the university. The School of Theology that is home to ISB falls into the Faculty of Human Sciences. We are all under the deanship of Prof Nicholson. We are fortunate to have Prof Nicholson as our dean because he is a theologian and ordained as an Anglican priest. Therefore we know that when we take matters to him, they require little explanation because he understands them. It is a great pleasure to welcome you here and to hear some words from you on behalf of the faculty. Welcome.

Welcome

Prof Ron Nicholson, Dean of Human Sciences Faculty, University of Natal



I apologize that I was not with you yesterday. I was in a meeting in Durban. Prof Richardson kindly agreed to swap, that's why he was here yesterday and I am here today. I am not quite sure about what I meant to be doing today other than telling you how very proud the University is of the ten years of history of the Institute for the Study of the Bible.

Always as we think about things we are probably influenced by the immediate circumstances that surround us at any given time. I suppose that two immediate circumstances that are in my mind

at the moment are that earlier in this last week I was at meeting of all the deans of the University.

Amongst other things we were talking about what is it that we are trying to achieve. Do we simply want to help our students achieve knowledge of enough facts to pass an examination? Or are we trying to develop them as people so that they can grow and be learning people through all of their lives? That is one thing that has been on my mind. Adding to that the question of are we trying to train our students in order that they will be powerful people, able to earn large sums of money to turn their five talents into ten talents? Or are we trying to train our students so that they will be of service to the community? The other thing that is on my mind is that yesterday at lunch time the lady who organises the university exposure to the media telephoned me to say I have to appear in Tim Modise's national radio show on Monday to talk about the events that happened in Uganda. I did not know much about the events; I spent a busy morning this morning reading the newspapers about this. Perhaps you have read the newspapers about the tragic event where a church in Uganda seems to have killed many of its members, about a thousand people now. It seems to me that these things happen in churches when the leader or perhaps a particular group of leaders get the power to tell their followers what it is that the Bible means. In this particular case, the leader managed to convince all the members of the church that the world was going to end, and that God was bringing the end of the world into place, therefore they should sell all their belongings and give them to the church. So the people sold all their belongings, they gave their money to the church and the world did not end. And when the people wanted their money back, they were killed. The Bible can be a very dangerous tool, or just having education of any kind can be dangerous, if what it does is to empower a small minority of people. It seems to me that this perhaps is what the Institute for the Study of the Bible is about. It ensures that the liberating force of the Bible is not just for a small group of the highly trained.

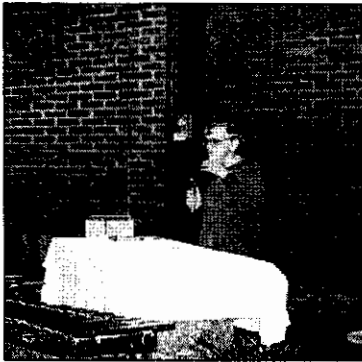
It gives people the power to interpret the Bible for themselves and to discover its liberating power. I don't know if I have correctly understood what the ISB is about but that's what I think it is about in part. That is why I am able to say that from the University point of view, it lies very close to what it is that we are trying to achieve for the whole of the University program. It is quite a dangerous course that you follow. The interpretation of the parable of the talents that you have heard is an illustration of how dangerous. It is not just the Sunday school teachers who told you that the man with the most talents was the hero of the story, I think is actually what Matthew means as well.

Taking different meanings to the story can be a very dangerous thing to be doing, it is a very provocative thing and a very exciting thing to be doing. I am not sure where it leads you and not sure where the end of such a liberating road will be. It is a journey that has a destination that is very uncertain. A journey where I expect that you are placing your power not just in a God up there but in a God within you and the Holy Spirit who is helping you to interpret the Bible in the way that God is leading you now.

But let me not venture into a sermon. I really want to say from the University point of view that we have noticed with great interest and great joy the growth of the Institute for the Study of the Bible. It comes from the small beginnings and a tiny community to something that grows and reaches up to more people all the time. In the course of ten years ISB has sent out into the community a whole group of people who have been trained to be servants of communities. That's something for our institution itself to be very proud of and I wish you well and I won't be here for your next tenth anniversary, but I hope many of you will be here in ten years time. Thank you for allowing me a chance to speak to you.

History of the ISB

Prof Gunther Wittenberg, Founder of ISB



Thank you Master of Ceremonies. I want to thank you especially that you have invited me. I am out of ISB for five years but I am still there with my heart. I think it was interesting for me to look back and to reflect, asking myself a question how did it all come about? I recently have read a book that declared that 1968 was the year of students' revolt. In that year two very important conferences took place. The first conference was a Synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, which discussed the proposition that I have made concerning the establishment of training for Lutheran pastors. The

church asked me to carry the process forward because I had initiated it. This led to an agreement with the University in 1972, and later the School of Theology which is today the home of ISB was established. However, I do not want to bore you with the history of School of Theology. I want to talk about the second conference, which was a Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (FELCSA) conference.

FELCSA was the precursor of the Lutheran Community of Churches in South Africa. This conference was dealing with the impact of the apartheid on churches and missions in South Africa. It was a follow-up conference to one in Maphumulo in 1967, which had issued the so-called Maphumulo Memorandum. This memorandum was publicised in the press with a big banner written: "Lutherans reject apartheid." I had been one of the drafters of the memorandum and I was therefore asked by organisers of this conference in Rustenburg to conduct a number of Bible studies at that conference. This conference made a number of recommendations concerning the general political situation and the unity of the Lutheran churches. In 1970 to 1972 I was in Germany with the family and when I came back I worked as a lecturer in the University of Natal. I wanted to implement some of these Rustenburg recommendations because I was concerned about the political situation. My aim was to establish a racially integrated Bible study group of people from all Lutheran congregations in Pietermaritzburg.

Manus Buthelezi, a director of Christian Institute (CI), assisted me in finding suitable people and we established that Bible study group. We became good friends and later on when he was banned, we visited him regularly. I had been a member of the CI in 1964 and participated for many years in ecumenical Bible study group in Stellenbosch. I believe that Bible study groups contributed to the unity of Lutheran churches. I was very pleased yesterday evening to hear that the Bible study groups are contributing to the unity of churches because it is what we experienced in the Christian Institute. There is also an opinion that these Bible study groups could be contributing to the awareness of the context. That was what I wanted to do when I established my own Bible study group. I wanted to contribute to greater Lutheran unity but also to a greater awareness of the political situation. I think the impact of the white members was not very great. However, I became friendly with a number of Evangelical Church of South Africa (ECSA) members and friendships developed out of that. There was another important development in 1981 when Reverend Khwela from Sobantu Parish asked me to help him in his parish. There were sixteen congregations, forty five lay-preachers, one pastor and one evangelist. I agreed to help by preaching at Machibisa once a month. I was confronted by a situation of being in the black

congregation for the first time. I had been a middle-class pastor and in the University. Suddenly I asked myself a question: "What are we contributing really for the grassroot people?"

At the time I was busy developing the Bachelor of Theology training at the University. I began to ask myself that if we establish BTh training, what effect would this have to the grassroot people? Would the local communities benefit from deeper and new theological insights? Would the many lay-preachers be able to access such training? Would they be able to obtain skills to do the work better than they were actually doing - all these forty-five people? If the university theological education was restricted to the privileged few, was it really relevant? The same question that the Dean just posed. It was something that bothered me a lot as I was busy establishing the BTh.

I was thinking what we needed were committed Christian people with biblical training who were able to train those who needed the information and the skills to do the job effectively. At this time I became interested in the history of Catholic Christian Orders. I saw that Orders had always in the history of the church responded to certain needs. And that we in the Lutheran Church had become poorer because we had perpetuated the decision of the Reformation by abolishing the orders. I became a very good friend of Gerhard Lundman who joined me to become a chaplain at the new Lutheran residence and we shared the vision reflecting this.

The next important milestone in the history of the ISB was in 1985 at the advisory committee meeting on Lutheran Theological Education in Africa. This was very important for the BTh because at that meeting the Lutheran World Federation finally committed itself to funding the new BTh program me. Three months later the memorandum of agreement was signed between the South African Lutheran Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the University, which established a new BTh. We had a very interesting discussion about the crisis situation of Africa. We heard an interesting paper given by a Swedish sociologist working at the Ford Foundation. He said that the only institution in Africa which had retained some credibility was the church.

All the other institutions and political parties had lost their credibility. What the sociologist demanded was really far too difficult for the organised churches. Only really committed groups of people could work for change and education of the grassroots. I was getting confused because I did know that I had some ideas. I was looking for the mechanism to communicate the skills taught at the University to people at grass-roots level. I was interested in the Orders and I thought they might bridge the gap between academic theology and ordinary people. But I was not clear how I, myself fitted in this picture.

In September 1988 I was given the opportunity to participate at the third world Lutheran Conference in Brazil. I asked that I become introduced to the Bible movement based in communities associated mainly with the name of Carlos Mesters. This was arranged and a detailed program was arranged for me with Prof Milton Schwantes who was a close associate of Carlos. He had been at the Lutheran Seminary at the Sao Leopoldo but had moved to an ecumenical post-graduate program at the Methodist Seminary in Sao Paulo. I was fascinated because he was a Professor who was greatly involved in the

grassroots Bible Movement of ordinary people. I saw how liberation theology was a living dynamic concern and how it reached the people through the many courses and projects offered by the seminary. Things that I saw in Brazil resonated deeply within me and everything started to come together in my mind. I was convinced that we needed something similar in South Africa.

I In February 1989 at the staff retreat of the School of Theology I startled my colleagues of the department when I told them that I was thinking of resigning from the university in order to use my energy in establishing the ISB. In my mind this was linked together with the establishment of religious communities. The Kenosis Community Trust had just been formed and we had bought the property at Bishopstowe from Hayfields Lutheran Congregation. I envisaged the new biblical institute and a religious community to be established at the centre. In the discussion my colleagues convinced me that this was not a good idea. The establishment of the institute separate from the department would hardly be a viable process, and I had to believe that they were right.

I therefore proposed the alternative that I would resign as the Head of Department and make way for a younger and more dynamic successor to enable me to develop the institute. At the same time I requested that we appoint a full-time co-ordinator and I suggested Gerald West who was just completing his doctorate. The staff accepted this suggestion. During 1989 we obtained funds from the Evangelical Mission in Hamburg in order to appoint Gerald as full-time co-ordinator. In 1990 we started with Bible study groups for students looking at a text from the book of Exodus. This was suggested to us by the United Congregational Church of South Africa (UCCSA) who wanted study material on that. The input I gave was re-worked by Mrs Numberger and that became our material for the first ISB publication. Dumisani Phungula was responsible for the layout, he had just finished computer training in Gauteng and I had invited him to join us. This is how ISB began.

A concluding reflection is, what would have happened if I in fact resigned from the university in 1990? Probably not much. ISB would hardly have got off the ground. It needed the backing of the university and the vision and the leadership of Gerald. I must say that without the University and Gerald, ISB would not have flourished.

Kenosis, the other project also might not have happened. Today, looking back over the last ten years I am happy because ISB, with its aim of bringing biblical insight to the grassroots, has been established and it is flourishing. I am also happy that since 1996 when Kenosis was established, ISB has been involved in helping our training program me. One of our Kenosis students, Dombo Sinthumule is now an ISB intern.

Let me conclude by saying that at the beginning of the two organisations, ISB and Kenosis, stood a vision. It is important that we have visions and that we do not loose our visions. However, a vision is not the only thing that matter, it needs a particular Kairos for it to be realised. It also needs the grace of God because without it ISB would never have become what it is today. Thank you.

History of the ISB

Prof Gerald West, Director of ISB

I greet you all in the name of the Lord. This morning I want to say something briefly about the early history of ISB and I hope that what I say will add to what Prof Wittenberg has already said. My involvement with ISB began in the late 1980's. In 1989 I was finishing my doctoral thesis and the work I was trying to do was looking at ways in which the Bible was used in the context of liberation. I was looking at how the Bible is used in black theology, feminist/womanist theology and Latin-American theology. I was reading and studying, trying to understand the place of the Bible in changing the world in which we live especially here in South Africa. I was dialoguing with a number of people including black theologians in South Africa like Itumeleng Mosala and Takatso Mofokeng. I dialogued with students in the School of Theology postgraduate seminar.

One of my dialogue partners was Gunther Wittenberg. Many of the things he has shared with you are the things he lived. He lived these things in his life at the School of Theology and that was the environment in which I was doing my work. He was there and he continually reminded us of these important things. His journey met with my journey in some ways. I studied and read the work of liberation theologians. I came to realise that there is something missing in their work. They all spoke about the poor and the marginalised but the voice of those people was not there.

That worried me to the point where I got angry, I finished the final chapter of my PhD thesis and said "so what?" I started a new chapter and the new chapter was: "what about the role of ordinary people in the reading of the Bible within a liberation perspective?" It was that concern that began to link up with the kinds of concerns that Gunther had. We were journeying towards the same point and that became a meeting point. The School of Theology decided that it would be important to look at this issue in more detail. When I was offered the job to work as the co-ordinator for ISB, it was as if I was taken to heaven because I was to do what my heart and head together felt was an important thing to do. This was at the end of 1989 and I spent the whole of 1990 mainly consulting. I travelled all over South Africa, consulting with everyone who was doing work in contextual Bible study. I was trying to determine whether the resources of biblical scholarship were available for ordinary people to use. While I was doing that, I was given the opportunity to travel to Brazil. Like Gunther, my visit to Brazil was very important because it was life changing in many ways. I was fortunate to travel with Jim Cochrane.

I got very excited with what I saw in Brazil. I saw a grassroot Bible movement. I also had questions: it seemed to me that there were different models of Bible reading in Brazil. There were some where the academics were very dominant and some where the academics were servants to the people. I was trying to understand which of these models was the more powerful model for our own context here. I came back from Brazil with all kinds of exciting ideas, which I shared with Gunther and others.

I need to say that the person who paid for me to go to Brazil was Rev Frank Chikane who was then the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. He was very concerned that we understand the potential of the Bible in social transformation within our context. Hence he actually took the money out of his own discretionary fund at the SACC and paid for me to go Brazil.

1990 was a very important time as I travelled around, reporting back to Gunther and others at the School of Theology. We were trying to understand what God was saying to us about the work of the ISB. In that period as Gunther indicated, there were small groups of people doing Bible studies in the Pietermaritzburg area. We met on a weekly basis and did Bible studies together. We were not only learning from other agencies but we were also learning from doing Bible studies together. I think that learning from the people themselves, not just academics, has been the greatest strength of ISB over the last ten years. We have learnt from the people, they have taught us what it means to read the Bible from our context. Many of you would know that the 80's were very difficult times in Pietermaritzburg. There was a war going on in those days and we thank God that it has changed substantially. In those days I was involved in taking affidavits from people who were resettled from areas like Table Mountain to Plessislaer. I was there taking statements from people and trying to understand what had happened to them. As soon as people heard that my area of study was the Bible, they immediately said "Can you come and help us understand the Bible in these times?" My honest answer was "I am not sure that there is anything I can teach you, but maybe together we can hear what God is saying." For me that was a crucial experience as I came to realise that as an academic the study of the Bible can only take one so far, but it does not take one all the way. I realised that what was important was that those of us who study the Bible have something to contribute and that people from the poor community also have something to contribute. These two things came together, which make the ISB what it is.

It is a sharing of resources. Those early experiences for me were extremely formative in what the ISB was to become. I think 1990 and a few years after that, the focus of the ISB work was what we can call Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's). The people we linked with in those days were NGO's. We met with other groups of activists who were doing the similar kind of work around the country, groups like ICT (Institute for Contextual Theology), TEP (Theological Exchange Programme), Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christians Social Awareness (PACSA), etc. Gradually what happened with the ISB is we moved from working with the NGO's to community based organisations (CBO's). I think that was the crucial shift in the work of ISB working predominantly with community-based organisations and those are the people who are mainly represented here at this tenth anniversary.

It reflects the shift in ISB, to not only work with activists but also with ordinary people in the community which is very important. I think that during my work in 1990 as the Co-ordinator of ISB, I came to see the limits of what I could do. I came to see that as a white male South African, there were certain limits to what I can do. I came to feel that the co-ordinating work of the ISB needed to be done by black South Africans. I became aware that I needed to make space for others to come and take over that role.

If the ISB was to be rooted in local community, we needed black South Africans to take over that role. There was only so much that someone like me could do. I think in 1990, the work of consulting was something that I could do, but the actual day to day work in local communities had real limits to what I could do. As much as that work is important and as much as I love it in the way it shapes my life, I fundamentally realised that someone else would need to stand in my place. In 1991 I had an opportunity to take on a lecturing position in the School of Theology. This left a vacant position of co-ordinating the work of ISB, which allowed us to appoint a series of black co-ordinators. It has become a tradition that we have established. McGlory Speckman took over from me, he is now teaching the New

Testament at University of South Africa (UNISA) and sends his apology for not being able to be with us today. He made a very significant contribution to ISB.

All of the ISB co-ordinators have shaped the ISB substantially. One of the wonderful things that Gunther did was that when he established the ISB, he did not control it. He gave birth to a vision, but he let that vision grow. He let the people who entered the vision shape it. He allowed me to shape that vision and I hope that my own role has been the same in allowing each co-ordinator to shape the ISB in the way that they see as appropriate. There is no doubt that McGlory Speckman did that. He brought his own contribution to the ISB and really added to the vision.

He was then followed by Bafana Khumalo who also sends his apologies. He has another workshop this weekend as part of his church commitment. Bafana is deeply committed to the work of ISB and he made a great contribution in terms of the vision. Alongside McGlory and Bafana was Dumisani Phungula who started off as an administrator and desktop publisher of ISB. Some of you will know that Dumisani was someone who did other work too, he ran Bible studies and engaged with people. People from Amawoti would tell you that Dumisani was the co-ordinator. He played as significant a role as people like McGlory, Bafana and myself did. I want to acknowledge him for that. He is a quiet and humble person, but he was someone deeply rooted in local communities. While Bafana was co-ordinator we were fortunate to be able to have an additional member of staff as we gained more funding. We appointed Rev Malika Sibeko who will come and speak just now.

I want to say that the addition of women to the ISB as staff members has changed our work in a very powerful way. As we know, the church is mainly the church of women in our country. It is women who sustain the church and it is women who minister in the church. They might not be in control of the church but they are the backbone, the heart and the lungs of the church. The appointment of Dix, minister of the church, was very significant for our work. I saw our work taking on a whole new dimension through her appointment. Initially she was a project co-ordinator and later became the Co-ordinator of ISB. Recently we appointed Phumzile Zondi and the two of them (Dix and Phumzile) have really deepened the work of ISB. They have engaged with the communities in a way that was not possible before. Hence, I want to honour them and thank them for enriching and deepening the vision. I have two more things to say and then I will hand over to Dix.

As many of you will know, the House of Studies for Worker Ministry was a project which has its own history. A few years ago this project entered into an alliance with the ISB and became a part of the ISB. This is how we came to welcome Mzwandile Nunes and a group of workers and co-ordinators in the area of Worker Ministry. This linkage is a new phase of the work of the ISB. We are learning what it means to live and work together. Having seen what has happened in the last two years, I have no doubt that the two projects are slowly becoming one. We are learning from each other and we are growing together. I think the vision has been enriched through the presence of the Worker Ministry Project in the ISB.

For some of you who are not aware of this history, it is a very recent history. We do not quite yet know how to speak of ourselves, sometimes we speak of the ISB and sometimes we speak of Worker

Ministry Project. I am trying to communicate that we now see ourselves as one organisation, the ISB. One of the programmes of the ISB is the Worker Ministry Project. We share the same commitments and vision, and we share a similar biblical approach.

Finally let me say that my own life has been fundamentally shaped by the work of the ISB. I am who I am today because of the ISB. Everything that I do, all that I teach in the School of Theology, all the researching that I do and everything that makes sense to me in terms of my faith comes from ISB. I am not sure where I would be without ISB, I am not sure that I would still be in the church and I am sure that I would still be teaching Biblical Studies. The ISB has enabled me to make sense of the Bible in our context. It has enabled me to make sense of my faith in this context, and for that I owe the ISB everything. Thank you.

History of the ISB

Rev Malika Sibeko, Co-ordinator

I have been waiting for this celebration and now that it has finally come, I am not well. I was supposed to be with you yesterday, but I was not well. There is an African belief that when something does not go well one is bewitched but this is not the case, I am just not well. But we are still celebrating.

In 1994, after I had finished my BTh, I was not sure whether I would go back to the church where I had worked before, because in the Methodist Church we have what we call invitations. If the church sends you to University, they know that you are finishing at a particular time. Hence by the beginning of finishing year, the negotiations begin. I did not hear anything from the church and I began to wonder what was happening. I was getting worried, and to my surprise Gerald, McGlory and Bafana talked to me about joining ISB. I said to myself "this is wonderful". I immediately went to speak to the presiding Bishop Magoba and he allowed me to work with ISB on condition that once I have gained enough experience, I will come back to work for the church again. He gave me a period of two years. It was in 1994 and I am still with ISB six years later.

Initially it was difficult to adjust from having been a student to working with the people who had been my lecturers. When one has been teaching you, one knows your grades, which made it difficult to start engaging with them on a different level from the one of a lecturer/student. It was a struggle I had to deal with for a while but with God's help I managed. Gerald encouraged me to keep going to the staff retreats, which I found particularly difficult. Now I am encouraging Phumzile to keep going. I am sure that Phumzile will be doing the same to those come after her. It is a cycle. It is actually very helpful to see the progress of moving from step one to two. It also helps to work with people who are supportive because you can see yourself growing.

In ISB the Bible is read in a different and interesting way. One reads in front of the text, behind the text and so on. There is this text that I love, and Phumzile my colleague, she knows it. It is 1 Timothy 2:8 onwards, I love it. I used to hate it because it is about women having to be silent. At the seminary, I was one of three women and male students would hammer us with this biblical text. They would tease us,

saying the church would not accept women ministers. I used to feel like ripping that page out of the Bible but that would not have helped because other people would still have it in their Bibles. I think what helped was to know what happened behind that particular text. I now tell people about this text and I say to them: "If you know what happened behind that text then you will understand what is happening in this text".

So I love this text now because the text does not tell me to keep quiet. It is saying there was a movement happening in that time which was empowering women. It is saying, "Go to ISB and your life will be changed." What I like about transformation is that one does not become selfish with the transforming power. When one is related to ISB, one passes on transformation to others. Working with Dumisani and Gerald in 1997 was helpful for me as the Co-ordinator of ISB. It is so nice when there is a support system. I see this all the time at ISB. When new people join ISB, they are supported.

I just want to take this time at this celebration to say thank you to Dumisani and Gerald. Thank you for the support and for being able to see some skills where others would not have seen. I wasn't sure that one day I would be a co-ordinator of ISB. When one grows in an environment where being a woman equals being inferior, one goes around with such a complex all the time. You want somebody one day to say "I have seen something in you, you are skilful and I would like you to use that." This is what Gerald says to us all the time. Gerald, I thank you for that. The work that we do as co-ordinators is with the help of the interns. Amongst us we have people who worked during Bafana's time. I would like S'taki, and Thenjiwe to come up and share with us the work that they did. Thank you.

Past ISB Intern

Mr S'taki Alfred Ramphile

I do not come here as a staff member. I was an intern. I was working with Bafana for about four years. We mainly worked with the community from Sobantu and Machibisa. The reason behind our internship was to establish how people read or understand the Bible in the community. As interns we made sure that we did not tell them how to read the Bible. The purpose was to understand their way of reading the Bible. In our analysis we found out that we had three types of Bible readers. There were those who read from the front of the biblical text, others read it as it is, which is problematic, and others involved the historical event, as Dix was mentioning the history behind 1 Timothy.

As an intern the work I was doing had socio-political and economical effects. Socially, it made us to be known and to know people from Sobantu. We interacted with people and it helped us in our studies. The political wars in the township in that period affected our work. We learnt to make room for the fact that at times people would not come to the workshops because of the violence. We also made sure that we were honest with the people we worked with. We assured them that we were not using them as subjects of academic research. Lastly, I want to say, "try by all means not to speak for the poor but let them speak for themselves." Thank you.

Past ISB Intern
Rev N. Sekhwari

I came to Pietermaritzburg in 1993 and I did not know anything about ISB at that time. I met people like Solomuzi and Magdalene who were already involved with ISB. I would hear them talking about Tuesdays where they would go out to Sobantu and Machibisa. I did not know what was going on and I was not sure about joining ISB because my main purpose of coming to the university was to study and pass. This purpose was the main thing in my head and that is why I wanted to only concentrate on my studies. I did not know that they were actually thinking that I should also involve myself with ISB. When they finally spoke to me about it was when they had a biannual workshop at Denison residence. I was requested to record what was being said.

This is when I started to see what ISB is all about. Communities were reporting on the work that has been done by ISB. My interest started to grow from there. In 1996 I became totally involved with ISB. We were doing work with the Amawoti community. I do not speak Zulu, which meant I did not get to do most of the talking, but I did the recording. This also gave me a chance to just listen to the whole process. I also did preparations so that those who speak Zulu would do the job. We would go on Saturday and read the Bible with the people there. It was to help them realise that God talks to you in your own situation. It was interesting. The community was very poor and it was suffering from unemployment and violence. There were a lot of problems that they were experiencing. So they had questions about the existence of God and why, if he exists, were they suffering. As we read the Bible with them, they would realise that God does exist and that he is concerned about them.

There is something that should happen when people read the Bible. They should realise that they can do something. While we read the Bible with Amawoti people, they began to see that they do not have to rely entirely on someone to give them answers from the Bible. They began to see that they have the power to read the Bible themselves. They got organised and began to do things as a community helping each other. They came up with action plans and the ISB was assisting in terms of guiding them on procedures they could take in approaching their authorities in order to help themselves. They had courses offered to help them gather leadership skills in order to help their own community. They also learnt Bible study facilitation skills. At the end of the course they were presented with certificates. The process was still going when I left. I am sure the ISB knows what is happening now in that community. I left because it was my time to go to the parish. As a new pastor, people had expectations and I did not know what they expected from me. I was frightened when I got there. I had to learn isiSotho and be a good pastor. I had a lot of things to do when I got there. I had to learn the situation. I suggested that the parish should come together during the week to have Bible studies. The parish thought "Ah, what is this woman doing, we go to church on Sunday. She should leave us alone." Fortunately I managed to have them agree to come. We gather on Tuesdays and we try to look into the Bible. As usual they expected me as the pastor to come up with ideas. When I did not give them answers, they said "You are from school and you have been taught the Bible. We do not know anything. You must give us answers." I told them that I understand, but I know that their heads are not empty. I told them that they have a lot that they can teach me. Initially it was not very easy for them, but they began to see my point. We started at a very slow pace and now they are telling me that they can read for themselves. I told them that I am happy about their realisation because they can now know that God does not

necessarily talk to a pastor, but can talk to anybody. Once they asked where did I get my training because they have had a stream of pastors coming their way but not one of them has done the things that I do. Some admitted that at first they did not like the way I did things, but that they are now happy because they are able to take their own Bibles and read.

They can think about things. One day I took the text in Timothy and said, "Well, I am a woman pastor and I am standing here in front of you. Let us read this text. According to this text I am supposed to be sitting down and being quiet. You know that I do not have a husband. Whom do I ask when I go home?" We also read about Tamar who was raped by her brother and other stories of the Bible. That was a big challenge to them. They opened their mouths and said, "These things are here in the Bible and all along we had our Bibles yet we just did not see them!" I told about the importance of reading our Bible carefully. Pastors do not know everything there is to know in the Bible, sometimes we direct people selfishly, but if the people know their Bible well, they can call us to order.

When the Diocese requested me to take the Bible study in the conference, I thought to myself about what I will do since there were professors there. These guys were very learned, and I had just recently come to the parish. I then remembered that it was not different from what I do with the congregants. I tried to do what I do with the congregants. One of my friends assured me by mentioning that long sermons are annoying. My friend felt that there is a need for a real Bible study in such conferences. I thought to myself that God has sent my friend to assure me. I used the ISB method, which was different from what they normally have. They expected me to be carrying large papers with long speeches. I told them that we would learn together and proceeded to ask them to open their Bibles at a certain text.

I presented the ISB styled questions in relation to the biblical text and they started reading their Bibles. They found it so interesting and exciting. At the end I challenged them to do such Bible studies with their congregants. I give credit to ISB because it has taught me that every person deserves respect. Thank you.

Past ISB Intern

Ms. Thenjiwe Ndimande



I feel honoured today to be given this opportunity to stand in front of you and talk about ISB. ISB is a community-based project, it reads the Bible with different community members and with church leaders from different churches. It deals with social issues using the Bible, issues like women abuse, child abuse, rape and Aids. Some of these issues were introduced even though the Bible does not use the exact words like Aids. There are biblical texts that tell us about incurable diseases like leprosy.

ISB was an eye opener to me because after being involved with it, I began to look at life in a different perspective. I use to read the Bible but I was myopic because I claimed to understand it. ISB helped me in taking a different approach in the way I read the Bible. I started to question many things from the

Bible. I was able to get some of the answers by myself. I could read the Bible in front and behind the text. ISB has empowered me, it taught me how to run and facilitate many workshops. It builds the person in totality. It uplifts those who are spiritually and emotionally down. There are also democracy and freedom of expression. It is colour and gender blind. It focuses on everyone especially the marginalised people like women. In ISB, we dramatise some of the stories in the Bible, using the members of the community. This made it a lot easier to the people because they then understood the text better.

We once had a conference in Koinonia Conference Centre, where there were many people from different countries who spoke different languages. It was through drama that all of them could understand what was really happening in the text. Hence drama had an impact and I believe it still has. ISB boosted my self-esteem in discussing the Bible with other people. My speech would not be complete if I do not mention the name of a special woman whom I worked with at ISB and whom I value the most, that is Rev Malika Sibeko.

How can I forget you, Rev, who many call Dix? You made me belong to the community of ISB. It is through ISB that I visited many places. I will mention Amawoti. It was through ISB that I visited Bethlehem where I was privileged to run a workshop for policemen's wives who were depressed by the social situation. I was also privileged to meet teachers from Bethlehem and shared the Bible with them. I was also able to run workshops for people of Northern Province.

Personally, I feel the letter **I** in ISB stands for the insights I gained in understanding the Bible. The **S** stands for the skills as an intern of ISB, and the **B** stands for the blessing I have received from ISB in understanding the contextual study of the Bible. Today I am proud to say I belong to a women's group called "Yinhle Lento", meaning this is beautiful. I help them to understand the contextual study of the Bible and we share the Bible studies. I have found that in helping others, I am in fact helping myself. This brings me joy. I am also a member of the Aids Desk in Mpumalanga. I work with doctors and members of the community. William Leonveldt says: "Real happiness is not dependent on external things. The pond is fed from within." Thank you.

Visitor and Friend of the ISB from Norway **Mr Jan Bjane Soedal**

I am very happy to be here with you today. I was here in 1998 for six months at the School of Theology. I also followed the programs of ISB. I am writing my Master thesis in Norway but it is about ISB and contextual Bible study. I am looking at how to make it possible for people to speak about biblical texts. I am back for a couple of months. A few days before I left Norway to come here, I went to a theatre in Oslo. I do not often go to theatres but there was a particular play in the theatre that evening. This play had a big audience. I had to go to the theatre one-hour before to see if I could get a ticket. The play was based on a very old text. It was about the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible. Here you have one actor, all alone, with one table and two chairs. For three hours he reads and talks about the Acts of the Apostles. A few years before, the same actor did the play on the Gospel of John. This play, like the other, went on for weeks at the theatre.

My point is that people come in thousands to listen to the word of God in the theatre instead of coming to the church. My question is: "Why?" I think that it is because that which is read from the pulpit does not touch the lives of many people today. At least I can say this about my context in my country. They don't recognise their own lives in what is said in the church. However, the Bible still touches something in the lives of people. They go to the theatre seeking to hear it read as they would read it at home. The play was a very powerful experience for me. It is a sign that says to me that there seems to be in many places two different kinds of worlds, the life experience of ordinary people and how the Bible is understood in the church. What fascinates me in being with ISB is that you try to make these two realities come together and to speak to each other. There is in ISB the commitment to reading the Bible from a South African context. I think this is really the way to bring the Bible closer to our lives. In this way we can understand our lives and the Bible better.

I often feel that we spiritualise the Bible. But as I have learnt here, more than I have in Norway, dialoguing with the Bible makes the Bible very real. The Bible does not allow us to just jump into a different kind of world. It does not allow us to create ghettos. It creates unity between people and opens up doors between different groups. Hence, it is about sharing our lives, problems, cultures and joys, at the same time giving space to each other. As we were told yesterday, one comes with questions and finds answers within oneself. It seems so simple, but when I am at home I wonder why it is so difficult. So, I cannot really understand why I need to write a thesis on it, but that now the situation. I also think that by sharing and giving each other that space, we give each other the possibility to become who we are. We become who we are, seen as who we are, but at the same time we are being changed. This also something that fascinates me. It is really about who we truly are and being changed by the reality of other people.

I hope that in Norway we will be able to slowly start something similar to what you are doing. I spoke to women who have started a church resource centre for abused women in Oslo, Norway before I came here. They have started a Bible study group, but they are finding it very difficult to go on. We had a wonderful dialogue, I share with them what I have experienced here with you. They were asking: "How can we do this with women that are abused?" Next year they will open a resource centre for abused men who have backgrounds of abuse which disturbs their relationship with the church.

Perhaps it will be possible to have a Bible study group there. Many of you have given me a lot as you have been sharing with me. You have been very open towards me. You have challenged and changed me, a change which I hope will last. I wish to put this transformation into practice in my situation. I want to thank you and congratulate ISB in its tenth year anniversary. I hope that we still keep in touch in the future because I feel that I still have a lot to learn. I also hope there will be more people from my part of the world who would learn from what you are doing. I thank you very much.

Visitor and Friend of the ISB from Glasgow, Scotland

Rev Eric Anum



I bring you greetings from Glasgow where I come from. Prof John Riches who has visited you before also brings greetings. The faculty paid for me to come here because they know about ISB. They said they know about the project and that it is related to the University of Natal. This is how they came to pay for me to come to this celebration. They believe that ISB is doing good work in the communities. Hence, I bring all the greetings and congratulations from them. I am also bringing words from the Contextual Bible Study Glasgow group which is a child of ISB. This group is working among communities. It is a little different from you but it is also working with marginalised communities.

In Western Europe when one is talking about marginalised communities, one is talking about women, homosexual Christian groups, ex-prisoners and those who live at places coined as 'underprivileged.'

How did I get involved in ISB? This is a question that people have been asking since I have come here. I am a Ghanaian by nationality and I came into contact with ISB when I did my Masters in Glasgow. My thesis was on cultural relativism and biblical interpretation. I looked at the whole area of how New Testament texts in 1 Corinthians are being interpreted in Africa and in Europe. When I was leaving Glasgow, people were asking about how the Bible is read in Africa. This initiated a project called the Bible in Africa which got scholars from Glasgow and Africa involved in 1989. This went on until 1994 when there was a conference in Glasgow. Gerald, Bafana and McGlory attended the conference in Glasgow.

Before that, we had already conducted research in Nigeria on how the Bible is read in Nigeria. The whole idea of inculturation is very popular amongst African biblical scholars. The idea was to go and research amongst the ordinary people to see how they read the Bible in order to determine how we could use inculturation to help them. This was presented at the Glasgow Conference which was attended by Gerald, Bafana and McGlory. The European scholars also presented on how the Bible can be read in a western context in Europe.

There was a misunderstanding because the report showed that ordinary readers in West Africa were saying that survival theology is the way forward, not inculturation. The research showed that people read the Bible for real needs like being childless or looking for a husband or when there is hunger but they do not read the Bible to discover cultural issues. The research showed that most West African theologians think one should use culture to read the Bible, while ordinary people think that survival theology is the way. Having Bafana, Gerald and McGlory there saved us. They made us understand that you do not come with an agenda to ordinary readers because if you do you become surprised. You engage with them instead. This is how my interest in ISB started.

After that meeting Prof John Pobee was interested in reading the Bible in Africa. We had a meeting where it was decided that it would be good for me to work on a PhD because I was in crisis since the West African research seemed to have fallen apart. I picked up the research with the idea of visiting ISB to see how they work. I had to read papers that Gerald had written.

In 1994 I read as much as I could and in 1997 I came to see what ISB is doing. I had to look at the groups you were working with and the process you used together with the results. I arrived at the airport and Rev Sibeko was there to meet me. I was taken from the airport straight to the workshop at Kenosis with my luggage, and that is how I started. I worked with Kenosis and Amawoti communities. What I found was that the process was trying to come up with ways of reading the Bible that was free of dominance. The professors were trying the best they can to win the trust of the community. They were negotiating ways of working with them and I think the results were that liberation reading had the transforming power in those communities.

How has this affected my life? Firstly, my work with ISB brought home to me the need to redefine the role of the Bible as a dialogue partner in dealing with issue within the socio-cultural context. It revealed to me ways of reading the Bible. This redefinition of the role of the Bible must ensure that biblical interpretation is not a monopoly for one sector of the society. As a Presbyterian minister and being in the academia, I believe that this was a life changing experience. Secondly, my study has made the varieties of hermeneutics in Africa more apparent. The apparent fact is that as people seek to reconstruct African theology, they pay great attention to the varieties of hermeneutic models that are around. My interaction with ISB led me to adopt a stance that it is imperative to get people to talk and be aware of each other's agendas if we want to be at the cutting edge of the biblical interpretation in Africa. Theologians and ordinary readers respond to different situations and needs. However, there is still a need for theologians to talk to ordinary readers.

I would never ever forget reading the Bible at Kenosis where one of the students read and said, "This thing of David sleeping with Bathsheba is rape!" After each Kenosis meetings we had heated discussions. That was the experience I would never forget because it was a life changing experience for me because the Bible got so exciting. The experience has been with me all along. I realised the same thing happens in the contextual Bible group in Glasgow. I do not believe in homosexuality, but I am now actually reading the Bible with gay and lesbian people in a Bible study in Glasgow. They come up with all sorts of insights which bring heated discussion.

I thank God for the contextual Bible study in Glasgow because I get the experience of talking to people about the Bible. While I was with ISB I met Rev Sipho Mthethwa who was doing an evaluation of the ISB projects. It was so good for me to see the evaluations that were being made. I was so blessed because this formed a very big part of my thesis which I have finished, defended and which has been approved.

I am now going to share some of the things from my thesis. I noted in the review of the ISB's evaluation that apart from the its liberation goal, there was a wider need for reconstruction of African forms of theology. Many participants who felt that Africans must write their own Bible expressed this. This is an issue that redefines the commitment of organic intellectuals as people who ought not to be only concerned with liberation readings but also with the development of local theologies in the context of marginalised people. This has implications for the process and results of contextual Bible studies. The most effective methodologies in creating collaborative readings between ordinary and academic Bible readers are the ones with confidence building mechanisms in them. There is this particular gap between biblical scholars and ordinary readers in Africa.

In Glasgow, it is different because I have realised that there are people in the group who already have reading skills. They have an understanding of some parts of the Bible and they can read. I think that here in Africa there is a need to help people to reconstruct and put together what they are saying in a form that can be defended. The area of language is the one to look at. When I was at Kenosis I found some people would speak in isiZulu and I would be lost. A similar thing happened yesterday, someone started speaking in isiZulu and it sounded like important things were being said. I think there is a need to look at how language can be used between the ordinary reader and the scholar in order to have mutual benefit. The other thing that I sense was the need for an open declaration of interests. People want to know why there are strangers in their midst, and when they go back to where they come from, what will they do with the information they get from the community. Hence I think it is good that the groups have a clear understanding of why there are the scholars interested in reading the Bible with them. This will help the groups to be more open and confident in their sharing.

I am going to suggest that ISB goes on working with communities but mostly as the midwife, enabling people to generate readings. I also believe that it is important to continue reporting and letting people know what is happening. Gerald's inputs and reports on the things that he has been doing have made a great impact on some of us. The products of ISB should not only be limited to the benefit of South Africans, but should be something that should benefit others in other contexts. The Glasgow group is not at the point of being able to produce anything yet. The challenge for them is whether they will be able to produce something. I believe that the materials that are produced by ISB should be jointly owned with the groups that ISB works with so that no one is exploited. There should be a mechanism whereby the materials are produced in an analytical way which people can look at. This will make ISB to go out and be more useful in other places of Africa where the contextual Bible studies can be adapted. ISB already has the Glasgow Bible study, which makes it international. Justin Ukpog, who introduced the issue of inculturation, is talking about doing contextual Bible study in Nigeria, an inculturationist has been converted to doing contextual Bible study. Hence ISB should not only be concerned about developing South Africa but should be thinking both continentally and internationally. Thank you.

Interdenominational Committee for Industrial Mission (ICIM)

Pastor Phambili KaNtloko

I came into contact with Industrial Mission when I was working in Trade Unions. I worked for trade unions for six years. I want to say to ISB, a look backwards is a look forward. You see those who have walked before you and what they have gone through. It is where you get the inspiration to go forward.

As ICIM we have come to say to you, "you are because we are, and we are because you are." It is the same thing that a young man or young woman says - I guess most people, who are here, have already said that - they say, "sweetheart, I do not see a future without you." ICIM does not see a future without ISB. *Phambili, nga-Mandla ngalemmini yobungcwele, nina bantu mukhonzeni.* (Forward in power on this holy day and worship God.)

There are a few things I want to put as acknowledgment as well as a challenge to you – those who are working at ISB must listen carefully. You have succeeded in taking the University, an institution of higher learning to the community. I acknowledge you for that but the challenge now is to take the community to the University. I still dream of a day where the head or the professor of that University would come from the ranks of those who were taught by Reverend Sikhosiphi. I wish to see people from the community becoming professors who would teach other people from African Independent Churches. This university has recognised the knowledge of the people from the community and that they can teach others. However at the moment this is not happening. I will illustrate my point using the example of the premier of Gauteng, Sam Shilowa, who not long ago was a security guard at the *Star Newspaper*. He was in the unions and through the education of the unions he became a leader. Today he is premier of Gauteng because of the knowledge he acquired while he worked in the unions. It is an education out of a democratic structure that empowers.

The challenge for us is why is there a lack of such empowerment in the churches? Institutions like the church, which are of human dignity, where one is supposed to grow, have failed. It is only a chosen few who happen to have access to empowerment. This is my challenge to you, but also acknowledging that the path that you have taken is the right path. Education or theological training in ISB should be an education that empowers a nobody to somebody.

The last or the third challenge from me is that when we look at workers, we see Christ, as was confirmed by the research of Jim Cochrane. The workers do believe in the same thing that Paul is talking about in Philippians, that “To me life is Christ^{1/4}.” To the workers, life is Christ, therefore, there is nothing wrong with the workers, but the problem is with the church. When we look at the church, we do not see workers. When workers come to church, their experience, their status and their class position are not recognised. When you come to church, you become mixed and mashed like mashed potato. Hence the challenge is that we create space for workers to see themselves in the church.

I will leave you with two verses: Revelations 3:11, “Look I am coming home soon, hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown.” This is my message to ISB, in particular to Worker Ministry. As a commitment from ICIM we are saying to you (Ruth 1:16-17): “Do not urge us to leave you, to turn back from you. Where you go we will go. Where you stay we will stay. Your people will be our people. Your God will be our God. Where you die we will die and where you will be buried, we will be buried. May the Lord deal with me ever so severely if anything but death separates you and us?” Amen.

Past ISB Intern
Fr. Sikhosiphi Mgoza

I recall my experiences with the House of Studies for Worker Ministry with warmth. There was laughter and a lot of hard work. It was over a cup of coffee that the idea of my involvement with Worker Ministry came up. Rody (Mzwandile) told me that the project is ecumenical and it empowers those from disadvantage communities. It was something I would really like to do. We were doing fundamental studies that were liberating to people. You have heard from Mzwandile who has been talking about

some of the economic concepts that I had to translate into isiZulu. Sometimes I used to hold my head in the middle of the night feeling exhausted from translating, but I tried my best.

Some of the theological terms, even in English, are so difficult to understand. I had to translate them into isiZulu. Our ministers from the AIC's had to try to understand these things without any other background in academic Theology. The other disadvantage we had was with the people who came to teach. They would use difficult terminology and when interpreting for them you have to bring it down for the people with great difficulty. If a person lectures people who have hardly had any formal education as if he/she is lecturing university students, things became difficult. Nevertheless, we tried.

After doing studies which mainly dealt with social analysis we also did Bible studies. We read the Bible from the behind and in front of the text. This was helpful to them because some of the things we were doing in class they could use in their sermons. I wished that this project could stretch out to other communities, but we lacked resources which left it limited to a small area. It was like a drop in an ocean. We also did studies in Church History, which were so fascinating to the ministers. It was helpful for them to understand how come we all professed to be believers in Christ, yet we do not have unity. It is a pity that our classes in Church History did not cover all periods. However, they covered the period of the Early Church and the Church in the 20th Century. The most important one was that of how the missionaries brought the word of God to places like Africa. It was most beneficial to them. In that period of study the participants had to go and research the roots of their own churches. We also studied the Bible with workers, which was the hardest to translate from English to isiZulu. It is difficult to talk of centuries in isiZulu, centuries before and after Christ, but we had to make it understandable. I appreciate it that the good work that started then is and could be carried over by others with willing hearts that love to empower those who do not have the opportunities.

Entraide et Fraternite

Message from Jacques Briard in Belgium, read by Mzwandile Nunes

(Written by Daniel van Korkhova and Jacques Briard, who are responsible for the South Africa Desk, on 29 March in Brussels)

Dear friends.

We have been told that both the ISB and Worker Ministry Project will commemorate the tenth anniversary from the 31st of March and we would like to express our sincere congratulations and wishes to the members of ISB. And also our gratitude for the open-minded relations we have with them for many years. We, a small Catholic development NGO, will commemorate 40th anniversary from the 9th to the 12th of April with public events and workshops. We have paid special attention to economic initiatives, particularly in South Africa and KwaZulu Natal during apartheid times. Already in 1992, our organization expressed its real interest are the House of Studies for Worker Ministry. This was due to its orientation and participation in it of already known partners and friends such as: Paddy Kane, Peter Kerchoff and Jonathan Williams.

There are even more reasons to explain the constructive relations between the new Worker Ministry project and us. The attachment of the House of Studies for Worker Ministry Project to the ISB, and various collaborations in KwaZulu Natal on a larger level of common partners has given us inputs. We

have received inputs from different ISB people like Professor G. West and Mzwandile Nunes during regular visits in both South Africa and Europe. This will be confirmed again through the participation of Mzwandile in our 40th anniversary activities. These relations and experiences assist us in realising the challenges that are to be faced by both South Africans and overseas partners. This is happening as the era of apartheid ends. It is a time of globalisation, particularly for people and organisations that are referring to the gospel and refusing to see the Christians staying inside the walls of their churches. This is why we are wishing that the Institute for the Study of the Bible and Worker Ministry Project would continue to have human and financial means to continue the important work. We wish them more support and other kinds of collaboration to face big issues like economic justice, job creation, Aids, and contextual Bible training which facilitates the necessary social transformation. Once again our very sincere congratulations and wishes.

The Worker Ministry Project
Mr Mzwandile Nunes, Project Co-ordinator

We at Worker Ministry Project are happy to be associated in different ventures and one of the new ventures that we have recently been involved in is the launch of an Honours program one in Industrial Mission. What excites us so much about the programme is the fact that we have not only South Africans in the programme but also people from Tanzania, Kenya and a person from Burundi who now teaches in a seminary in Mozambique. John Bosko is the person who was chosen by the class to say something in this meeting about what they have been doing this year as a class. I hand over to him to say a few words.

Honours Student in Industrial Mission
Mr John Bosko

It is a privilege for me to represent a class for Honours in Industrial Mission. It is a challenge because I do not know why they chose me. In this short time, I want to share three things that we have learned from the course up to now. I will first talk about theory, then practical and the third will be what can we do in the future. The theory that we have covered so far is very interesting and challenging for us. Most of us who are coming from outside have never heard much about Marxism and Capitalist theories. We are coming from our churches in the rural areas. It has been a very good experience since Mzwandile, our lecturer, is very passionate about his course. So far we have done an analysis of Capitalism as a system and how it exploits people. This has been an eye-opener for us to see what is happening in the structures. We have also looked at the capitalists' intentions of making profit, disregarding human dignity. The second part focussed on the social classes and inequality. We looked at how the structure of social classes is the means to oppress people. We also looked at the biblical approach. We take a passage of the Bible and discuss as a group and conclude together. We rotate the facilitation of the group discussion.

The third part is the workshop we had here for almost three days. We spent time with someone invited from Khanya College. We looked at the Marxist system, at how it responded to the Capitalist system.

We focused on a South African context and it was challenging. For practical experience, we went to visit the Toyota Company in Durban where we saw what is happening with our eyes. We saw the Capitalist bosses who own the means of production. The workers were confined to the speed of the machine. We looked at how the machine is more important than the person operating it. The other part that is a challenge for us is the action plan. Personally as someone working in Mozambique where I will be going in two years time, I am wondering how I will deal with these issues. It is overwhelming and I become afraid because the problem is too big. Thank you.

To us also is an encouragement to become to have people from countries other than South Africa in the class. We have people from Tanzania, Burundi, Mozambique, and to think of the possibility of this kind of thinking going on in these countries is exciting. It has been very exciting to have Oswald Ndelwa. He is a pastor who has been married for many years. He has a long experience of being a minister in Tanzania. The class has benefited from his insights of uJama and the ideas of African Socialism that Nyerere put into practice in Tanzania.

And we try to look at the kind of things that happened when the international community tried to ensure that such experiments failed. In other words, it was such an important experiment for Africa that certain very important institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank did everything in their power to ensure that Tanzania would not succeed with its policy. In the end, as you know, they capitulated and bought into the Neo-liberal economic model. For us, even though we did not win that particular battle, nevertheless uJama remains an important aspect of the thinking that we teach about inside the Industrial Mission class.

Young Christian Workers

Mandla Xaba, National President of YCW

Amandla! Viva YCW.

Young Christian Workers trains future leaders to examine their situation critically and pursue the right course of action. It concerns itself with unemployed youth. The relationship between YCW and Worker Ministry is built out of this concern for the unemployed youth. Unemployment in the country leaves 80% of youth unemployed. The ISB Worker Ministry Project unlike other institutions is concerned about the issue of the working class in spite of the fact that they are part of the tertiary institution. They could have just ignored the working class and dealt with the issues of the middle class and upper class. Through the ISB Worker Ministry we have been able to establish eight groups. We have three groups in Mooi River, two in Mpophomeni, two in Machibisa and one in Imbali. The issues that these groups are dealing with are unemployment, crime, and problem of a lack of finance to further their education. ISB provides the chaplains to these groups and helps to train both the chaplains and group leaders.

I would like to thank the ISB Worker Ministry for the financial support that they have given the YCW and say to them they must continue.

Umtata Women's Group
Ms Welekazi Sokuthu, Representative

They say there are four different types of people. There are those who do not know anything, but they do not know that they do not know. There are those who do not know, and they know it. There are those who know, but they do not know that they know. Lastly, there are those who know, and know that they know. If we were to look at the first type of people, they are called fools. The second type of people are called students. Teach these ones. The third group is asleep, wake them up. The last group is wise, follow it.

I would like to congratulate ISB on behalf of Umtata Women's group. We are happy to be associated with ISB. I am talking about these types of people so that I can clarify the kind of relationship that we as Umtata Women's group have with ISB. ISB for us falls in the fourth category, the type we coined as wise and our group is in the group we coined as students.

Umtata Women's theological group started in 1987. We wanted to read the Bible together. This was prompted by the conference we attended which was organised by the Institute for Contextual Theology during the time of the *Kairos Document*. It was in 1992 that we established links with ISB through Rev McGlory Speckman. He came to Umtata in May 1992. We talked to him about his work with ISB and our work with the group. We found out that we can work and establish a relationship with ISB. I want to say in our work with ISB in these past seven years what we have learnt.

The first thing I want to mention is affirmation, as lay women, we felt affirmed. We read the Bible as lay women who are just ordinary. ISB affirmed us in the fact that we can read the Bible in this way. In that time reading the Bible and discussing theological issues was for men. ISB has close links with the School of Theology at the University of Natal, this made us feel encouraged because some of them are qualified theologians and males. The fact that they approved of us made us gain confidence in what we were doing. I like their way of reading in front and behind the text.

The second thing in our link with ISB is that we formed some sort of a partnership and fellowship in the sense that we read the Bible using our context. ISB helped us in the way we ran our annual workshops. In 1993 we focussed on liberating ways of reading biblical text, in 1994 we looked at liberating leadership, and in 1995 Rev Bev Haddad helped us in our reading of Rizpah (2 Samuel 21). In fact it was through ISB that we began to pay attention to Rizpah. Rev Sibeko helped us in looking at women and the water of life, which was memorable. Some of our members attend many of the workshops conducted by ISB as participants and presenters. This is what I mean about having fellowship with ISB; it is that we also give something back to ISB.

The third thing is the networking. Our relationship with ISB initiated networking. Through ISB we have found other projects and organisations to fellowship with. It may not have been possible to link up with some these project without knowing ISB. ISB has helped us advertise our Bible study booklets. They have allowed us to display our books in their workshops. Lastly, ISB has taught us to look at the University differently. We have learnt not to be intimidated by the University because ISB is based there and it comes to the people. We learnt that as people we need to share our talents with the

members of our community and not confine them to ourselves. I would repeat what Thenjiwe has said about the impact of dramatising some of the biblical stories. It made passages in the Bible understandable.

To conclude, I want to say we wish ISB an even richer second ten years. We say go forward and reach all the types of people I have mentioned at the beginning of my speech. Thank you.

Kenosis Community

Caroline Mkhize, Student Representative

I want to thank ISB for existing because its existence has been a blessing to us. I would especially like to thank Dix who was teaching us and Phumzile who later joined in teaching at Kenosis. We benefited a lot from the teachings of ISB when it comes to understanding the Bible ourselves, independent of a minister. In our new understanding of the Bible, we began to see our place in the church. We thought that only males can stand in front of the church, tell us about the Bible and our duty would be to listen. The problem we always had was that the majority of the churchgoers are women but the leadership belonged to a few males.

However, to us who have been reading the Bible with ISB, there is a big difference in that we can inwardly dialogue with a man standing in front of us in the church. We have learnt to engage with men of the Bible and dialogue with confidence. We learnt that there is more than one way of understanding a biblical text. This woke us up and we began to see the importance of the Bible. To be truthful, I personally seldom read the Bible before meeting ISB. When I talk to youth about the Bible, there is not much enthusiasm. This is because the trend is that the minister stands in front and gives long talks that bore the youth to sleep. I have asked Sis Phumzile to come and do Bible studies in our church because I want the youth in my church to begin to understand the Bible. I want the youth to be excited and to attend the workshop in big numbers, not just a few who are afraid to hurt the minister's feelings. I want to say thank you and that we wish ISB to go forward. I really would like ISB to come to my church because we have a youth that would engage. They have a lot of questions and I think ISB could help in this situation. Again, I thank you.

Imbali Women's Group
Nomfusi Mlangeni, Representative

I have a poem to read to you.

Halala! ISB

The sun rises from the West.
It is raised by the son of West.
The darkness has left the dark house.
Have you ever seen the sun rising from the West?
Respect the holy vessel;
Yes, fellows respect the city of the saints.
This honourable person was born there
before he came to UmGungundlovu.
They are carrying this black book with a red mouth.
It opens their mind to see the exploitation.
They do not only see, but they fight .
They use their minds and talents.

In Free State, came Malika like ithwasa
to learn from the master of thwasa, the big
sangoma, Gerald.
She came thin, but now has grown flesh in her bones,
because the ancestor in her has been appeased.

Even the uneducated in ISB, knows about empowerment.
Even the one who has never been at the University
knows about the word marginalised and reflects.
Give light ISB to marginalised communities!
Where is MaHadebe to ululate
for her daughter umaHaddad, u my sister?
I can not forget the saying of a white man
which says, "Behind every successful man
there is a woman."
Forward ISB, forward women.

There is also Umangangendlovu,
a black woman.
I am talking to you, child of Zondi,
angikuzondi.
I have seen you being busy here and
there.
I nearly made a mistake by forgetting
Bafana and Dumsani.
They are like twins,
because they are izingqalamabutho
who worked on the initial stages of this work.
Nci nci bo!





It is hard to speak after a poet. It will be like I have said nothing. First I would like to thank ICIM and Rev Ntloko who made it possible for me together with our group to reach ISB. It was two years back, in one of the conferences ISB had organised. We were invited to attend a workshop, and thank you ISB for inviting our group to your tenth anniversary. We wish that you move from strength to strength.

If someone were to ask me about important things that have happened in my life and in the world in the past century, I would recall events like Armstrong reaching the moon, Chris Barnard doing a heart transplant for the first time, the liberation of South Africa and I would surely not forget ISB opening the eyes of the many blind in black communities. ISB ensured that freedom was not only about black people entering the parliament but that the very marginalised communities began to have some knowledge and defend themselves especially in churches.

I do not want to say that people had no say in the church but I am talking about communities that hardly went to church, those who thought that they had no place in the church because they thought the church is for the holy and the enlightened. I am talking about the communities that I happen to work with who thought that the church is for the people who can read the Bible, they said "What do we do because we could hardly understand what is being said?" I am talking about people who are living in the farms, farm workers especially women and children. They suffer a lot of harassment both physically and emotionally. They know no holiday. Recently we talked about human rights day, attempting to find out what it means to them because they still have to work. If it has been raining, even if it is a Sunday, they would have to work as usual. If you talk of floods and government compensation, the owner of the farm would just tell you "no work, no pay." So, I am talking about such people whom we engage with using the skills that we gained from ISB. We are allowing the people to reason and question the Bible. We have to give them hope by helping them realise that, "okay this God is not only the God of the rich and enlightened but God is also for us."

I am talking about people who are dying of Aids and have been marginalised because of it. We have made people realise that it is not because they are sinners that they are dying.

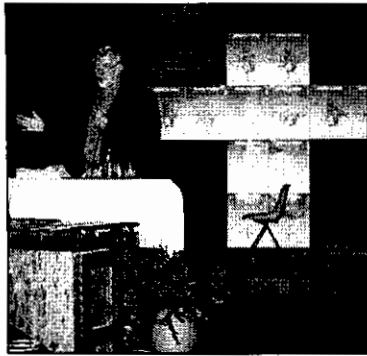
One of the speakers this morning mentioned that in the Bible people died of incurable diseases. I am talking about children who have been robbed of their childhood. They have had to sell their bodies, one of them stood up and said openly, "I am a prostitute." She related her story of how poverty led her into becoming a prostitute and at the end of her story she said, "It is not the decent men in suits that are labelled, but it is me who is called a prostitute." I am not forgetting young boys who have had to fight wars that they know nothing of. They have had to hijack cars for someone else's benefit. And the children who work in our kitchens, we bring them to our homes under the disguise of helping them yet they end up becoming slaves.

These are the people that I work with and I am grateful to be associated with ISB because the people I work with are seeing the light that God is for them as well as for others. I think that the work that ISB has done has been to unpack scriptures for people. I am very thankful being involved and associated

with ISB. I would like to say to you congratulations on your tenth anniversary, may you go from strength to strength and keep up your good work. Whenever I come to ISB, I leave with something new to share like the interpretation of the talents used by Rev Gwala this morning. Thank you.

History of the House of Studies for Worker Ministry

Prof Jim Cochrane, a Founder of the House of Studies for Worker Ministry



I want to say that I am thrilled that the Worker Ministry project has joined together with ISB. Both these projects have been very important in my own development. I have hoped even from the beginning that something like this will happen, although it was not on my control and it should not be. Nevertheless, I am very glad to see it happening. I say that being really humbled by what I have seen over last night and today. I have been away from Pietermaritzburg for three years so I have been sitting here and listening, trying to remember old faces and meeting old friends. I worked with the School of Theology for

ten years and I worked closely with Gerald and ISB. He helped me organise a conference on Church and Labour, so we go back in terms of Theology, Work and Labour (see *The Three-Fold Cord: Theology, Work and Labour*, Cluster Publications). I am quite overwhelmed and I did not plan to start this way. I am overwhelmed by the integrity, the strength and the quality leadership that I see shining through the eyes, actions and words of one after another person who gets up here.

I wonder why you even bothered to invite me. I take it to be an honour to be invited and I think it is. I think you are not honoured by my presence but I am honoured by yours. I feel this so strongly that it affects what I had planned to say. I am now in an institution where this kind of activity is not part of my life, this kind of strength of spirit, a combination of theory and practice does not happen in the same way. So, I thank you for the invitation. I really wish you great strength as you go from here. I have been specifically asked to reflect on the origins of the Worker Ministry Project rather than ISB, which I have had less to do with except in terms of support. Let me say a bit about my personal role in this.

It began in 1986 when the apartheid government was putting in place the national management security system, supposedly to defend the apartheid state against the onslaught. It was at the time that the worker movement in the form of the major union federations, particularly COSATU, were a central part of the struggle against this militarised attempt by the apartheid regime to control the history of the struggle and to oppress its people. It was a time of the *Kairos Document* which had just been released by the ICT under the Kairos theologians of which I had been a part. The Institute for Contextual Theology was also close to my heart because I had been involved in the founding of that institute as well. I have had a close relationship with it ever since. It was five years later that I had no fixed job. I had been directing an activist NGO in a black educational sector which was part of the Democratic United Front of that time and that job had finished. I then did not have anything to do and I was not sure where to go. The Institute for Contextual Theology approached me to work for a year on two projects from my base in Cape Town.

One task was to advocate for the *Kairos Document* which I did and the other one was to help launch a Church and Labour Programme. I was asked to launch this program partly because I was a close friend to Frank Chikane who was then the General Secretary of the ICT. It was also because I had written a book which came out of my doctoral thesis. In this book I was trying to understand my personal experience of the churches in South Africa, particularly the Methodist, Anglican and Congregational churches, all of which I had some relationship to. It was on the fact that the church spoke a great deal against injustices in all sort of ways but seemed to do so little. When the crunch came and the state acted against the Christian Institute, which I was part of, all the big words of assemblies and conferences meant very little on the ground. This puzzled me and threatened my sense of belief and faith in the church. So, I had written this book, attempting to explore that. One of the things that I was raising in terms of the history of South Africa was the labour unions, its rising and the workers' struggle. It also included the analysis of migratory labour practices as they developed on the diamond mines and compound systems to reshape South African political economy. The rise of the ICWU (Industrial Commercial Workers' Union) and Clements Kadalie and major strike action made me ask about the church's relationship to these things that were so important to the lives of many people.

There was not much to say except for a few courageous individuals. Hence, I think ICT's request for me to help launch the Church and Labour programme was a response to the questions I had raised in the book called *Servants of Power*. It was quite a challenge to me because my parents had been clerical types. My father was a sweet salesman and he never finished school. His claim to fame was that he was a great soccer player. After school I had been a ship's chandler and a railway's clerk, grade three, which was the lowest. I saved some money and went to university where I studied organic chemistry and I then went to industry to work for Afrox. I saw the factory floor for the first time, but not from the position of a worker. My background then, although it is not affluent, it is not that of a working class person. I cannot claim that the values of a working class person shaped my life.

I am middle class and even my role at the university as an intellectual has not been organic. I think I have to say this because it is critical to recognise it. So why get involved in issues of Church and labour in the first place? I think the answer is simple, for me anyway. I had done this analysis of the churches in history of South Africa; I had shown that very little had been done and I felt an ethical and moral obligation to try and at least say something about this. I could not criticise a historical weakness in the church if I was not prepared to make whatever contribution I could. It was as simple as that. I decided that I would take on the ICT Church and Labour project, not to represent the views and experiences of workers, but to document them and that is what I did in that year. I travelled around the country and talked to people about their experience as workers and as Christians. It is out of that I produced that church and labour history which Mzwandile referred to.

It included steps for actions which movements like Young Christian Workers had already worked out, and formulated how ministers and ordinary Christians could focus on the world of work. It was in this context that I re-established contact with Mzwandile who had worked with YCW at some stage. The ICT Church and Labour movement was much bigger than me, like all good ICT projects. It was designed along the lines that were set in place by its General Secretary, Frank Chikane. Those lines

were that we were not to take over any sphere of action or interests those others who are already established in it. We were to support and encourage them instead. I simply went and talked as widely as possible.

I talked to trade unionists, intellectuals who were attached to the trade union movement and Christians involved in the workers' movement. I gathered information and I learnt a great deal in process. I reported to ICT and I published it in a book. One of the things I learnt most forcefully there was that local congregations seldom integrated the concerns of workers into their church life. Ministers and priests, even those from working class backgrounds who have been trained and raised in status out of the working class, also seldom included life experience and expectations of workers in their preaching, liturgical acts and teaching. Distressingly, it seems that lay and religious people working in the field of labour from the Christian point of view were obstructed mostly not by apathy but by clergy. Mzwandile was one of those who taught me that.

Clergy (or so it appeared) most often feared that any movement in their midst which might have an independent life or a different authority was to be feared. I am sure that ISB has experienced this in their work at some point. It threatened their status and authority which therefore threatened their position in the church. It also could be that they just did not know how to deal with the situation of workers because they were not trained to do so. They fear losing face in the congregation if they found others moving in who had greater expertise. This is what the ICT Church and Labour project was looking at. We looked at the way in which workers felt alienated from their religious life. We worked with about 220 workers in small groups mostly from what was then the Transvaal, Natal, Free State and the Cape. Half of them were shop stewards and interestingly most of them were African Independent Churches' ministers.

That report was published by ICT and I think it is a very valuable document. Those who were most engaged in workers' affairs on the shop floor or unions were those who felt most alienated from the church. The more active they were in union work, the less they felt at home in the church. The majority of that group believed strongly that the Bible has a great deal to say to the life of workers, which was something that none of us expected. That realisation had a small, but significant part, I hope, in the conception of the ISB. I do not think that ISB has forgotten that and I think it is the reason that ISB is happy that Worker Ministry is now part of it because it has roots from that history as well.

If you look at all these things together, it seemed logical to me that one thing that I might do to improve the situation was to develop a project aimed at influencing the way ministers are trained both in seminaries and universities. This also offered a second benefit; if I used my position of power in the university as the base for pushing this, it would legitimise the work of the people in the field a great deal. I was aware of the work of others such as ICIM in Johannesburg and it was in this context with them that I proposed the formation of the House of Studies for the Worker Ministry. Archbishop Hurley, who was leading that workshop, took that proposal very seriously and encouraged a number of us to get involved in

doing something about it. This is how the House of Studies of Worker Ministry was born.

At first it was an autonomous NGO and now it is part of ISB at the University of Natal. It was an ecumenical initiative between churches and denominations, and I want to emphasise that. It was also driven by conviction that this House of Studies should be shaped by the insights and skills of workers or of those closely connected to workers, rather than the ideas of clerics. There were fears about this, some of the churches were worried. However, Archbishop Hurley persuaded those who were worried to put faith in it. He was quite crucial in this because it also meant raising funds.

The project really began to find its feet, to establish a credible and concrete presence amongst Christian workers when it finally employed someone who knew the field well, both practically and theologically, and that person was Mzwandile Nunes. There is no doubt that this project would not have gone anywhere without him. I want to honour and acknowledge that here. There were so few people at that stage who had a clue about how to relate these two things together, the world of work and the church. I cannot take you further than that history. It is at this point that I almost entirely moved into the background. In many ways I have eventually lost touch with the project in many ways once I had moved to Cape Town. I suspect that the welcomed political changes that this country has experienced have not altered drastically the central concerns of workers or the response of churches to the character of their lives.

The long-suffering activity of the Worker Ministry Project has made an enduring impact. From what I have seen since I have been here has simply reinforced that. My current area of interest is globalisation, but I will not talk about that now. I just want to wish the House of Studies for Worker Ministry and its symbiotic partner, ISB, very well in this celebration. What I see happening is that you are facing life challenges with great imagination and initiative. I am deeply impressed with what you are doing and I want to thank you for honouring me. Thank you very much indeed.

History of the House of Studies for Worker Ministry

Marie Ndungane, Past Staff Worker

In the name of King Jesus, I am thankful to be here today. When I first worked with the House of Studies, there was a small office and it had no desk. I asked myself if this is really what I want, but I knew that the office is for the workers, so I was happy to work as I am right now.

The House of Studies groomed me and I am where I am today because of being moulded by the House of Studies. There are a lot of things that I learnt during my time with the project. I also want to say that I was grateful to work together with Fr. Joe Folkner who was helping us in our working with the ministers at Mpophomeni. I thank the help of ISB in our progress with the ministers at Mpophomeni. I cannot mention all the help we got from many other projects. The main thing I would really like to say today is that the House of Studies was and is a living testimony. The lesson I learnt the most was to relate the Bible to the work situation. I learnt that every human being is made in the image of God. In

the Genesis. I we learn that God created the universe which makes God a worker. This made me realise that as a worker I am actually following God as a role model. God gave us brains and hands to follow and continue where God started. We are under the walls that are created by workers who are creative, using the talents God gave them.

I learnt a lot about the rights of workers, God did not make a mistake by having a day of rest. It proves the importance of the rights of workers. Nowadays there is no day of rest, the rich are continually exploiting the poor. Workers are expected to work throughout the week, which is a violation of workers and the law of God.

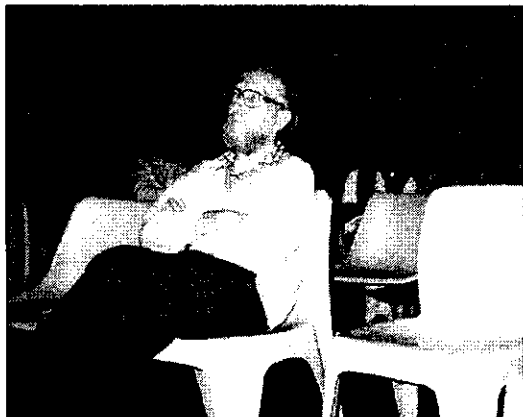
God as a worker had love and he appreciated everything he did, treating it with pride. When he finished each of his creation, he took time to say this is good. He liked what he did which means the worker should do the same. I just want to say that whatever I learnt at the House of Studies, I have been able to implement. Like God, I appreciate every end product of my work. The House of Studies started by visiting ministers around the Pietermaritzburg area. We ran Worker Sunday campaigns in churches. Every year we had different themes for Worker Sunday. It was a pleasure for me to work with Mzwandile Nunes. I might have left but there is so much that I learnt while I was there, for now I just want to say, thank you.

Evangelical Theological House of Studies
Rev Lukas Ngoetjana, Principal

I am bringing words of solidarity to the work of ISB/Worker Ministry. For the past three years we have a course called Industrial Mission. It is within the Diploma Programme that we have at Ethos. The person from Worker Ministry teaches that course because Worker Ministry deals with worker issues, therefore they are most qualified to teach such a course. We had not taught such a course before, so we had to open space for this course because it is very relevant. It is a deliberately practical course and its level of conscientizing students is very high. Mzwandile Nunes teaches the course tirelessly ever since it began three years ago without any charge. I am glad that we have an approximately eighty percent pass on this course.

In this course students do a lot of research and at times they travel to other institutions like Maphumulo where Mzwandile teaches a similar course. This gives an opportunity for students to interact and appreciate the value of the course. Our students are able to speak about the categories of the poor. I have not done the formal course, but from what the students tell me I envy them. I think it takes a lot of energy for a person to teach such a course and work with the poor. I believe that we have our strength from God. He sustains us in such situation. I would conclude by saying that we salute the work of Worker Ministry. We appreciate and thank them for networking with us. Thank you. Viva!

Department of Church and Work Commission
R. Joe Folkner



Sanibonani nonke! I want to give a tribute to the ISB from the Department of Church and Work and from the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference. This is a department of the Bishops' Conference concerned with the world of work. I am speaking on behalf of John Capel who had to go to Johannesburg. I will talk about my connection with the ISB for the moment.

I lectured in English and Sikhosiphi had to translate in isiZulu. We got into difficulties because I would mention a text from my English Bible which was not the same thing in the isiZulu Bible. I realised that when the Bible speaks about matters concerning workers, you need workers to translate that into their language. The people who did the original translation of the Bible were not workers. They put what they thought the Bible meant. They did not have the feeling of the workers. When the Bible talks about the slaves in Egypt for an example, the translator did not have the feeling of what it is like to be a slave. One of the things that I hope for in future is that maybe ISB and its friends can work on a decent isiZulu translation of the Bible.

I have also been connected with the Worker Sunday Campaign. It is wonderful to see ISB/ Worker Ministry doing Worker Sunday campaigns. I have been associated with people who work with the Worker Sunday for many years. In 1977, a year after the Soweto rising, YCW held a Worker Sunday in KwaThema, a township outside Springs. Fr. Mkhathswa, who is now a Deputy Minister of Education, spoke about how the apartheid system is affecting workers. We all realised that there was a role to play and that we were all being called. The hall was not full, there were a few hundred workers. The following year we had Worker Sunday at the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Johannesburg and YCW's were detained throughout the country, including Mzwandile Nunes. Some of the them were held for months and the apartheid government tried to find out who was behind the organisation. They could not believe that this organisation was founded here in South Africa by young workers. Worker Sunday has been going ever since then. Each year it has themes that deal with workers' conditions.

Some church ministers perceive Worker Sunday as a way of getting workers to come to church. This is not what it is all about, Worker Sunday is to inform the church people about the problems of the workers. It brings the church back to the workers instead. Towards the end of apartheid, the church actually got the courage to pray for the downfall of apartheid. The theme of this year's Worker Sunday is to pray for the downfall of the present economic system. It says "Babylon is falling". Again, I am so glad the ISB has adopted Worker Sunday.

The third thing I most want to talk about is the network that has been spread from those early years. I want to talk about Mzwandile who has played a key role behind the network. In this meeting there are people from many different places and organisations. It is an amazing gathering of old and young

people, workers and unemployed, university students and professors. This is due to networking. I first met Mzwandile in 1968 when he was a schoolboy. He was looking for something to do with his life. I was running a vocation workshop for young men who were thinking of becoming priests. He came to the workshop where he heard me talk about the YCW.

He decided to join and found his vocation in life which was to be with the workers. Already as a schoolboy he got to the regional committee in Cape Town. He became a regional office bearer. He put himself through University to learn about the academic side of things as well. He then became YCW's General Secretary. He also became the Secretary of this Church and Worker Commission that I am representing tonight. He set up a big structure influencing the Catholic Church through that. The Commission took over Worker Sunday, which in those days was just a Catholic project, but the vision came with Mzwandile that it should spread to other churches too. He has brought together organisations such as YCW, ICIM, University, Mpophomeni, the unemployed and academics. A few years ago, ISB had a Bible Week and the national YCW's were invited to participate. I don't think they have ever heard of ISB before then, and from then ISB/Worker Ministry began to promote YCW in KZN because this province did not have a YCW branch then.

So I thank ISB and Mzwandile for the work of building the Kingdom of God by bringing together the academics and the workers in our mission to hear the voice of God speaking to us through the burning bush. Go forward and thank you.

Sunday, 2 April 2000

Devotions: the Wedding in Cana, John 2:1-12

Phumzile Zondi

I want to concentrate on two things. In the text, when the wine runs out, Jesus' mother prompts Jesus to take some initiative. This highlights the importance of a mother. She said to Jesus, "make a plan." When I look at mothers today, the same thing happens. If we do not talk to our sons, they would not do anything.

We are the ones who are suppose to prompt them into action. We should tell them that things are not going well and they need to do something in order to bring about changes in our lives. It is this example set by Jesus' mother that I want us to learn from. If we keep quiet about issues, the status quo will not change. It would take women to speak out and tell men that all is not well.

I also want to talk about water and wine. Jesus used the water that was supposed to wash people's hands and changed it into wine. Normally wine is made out of fruits which have vitamins and other healthy goodness. However, Jesus uses water which would have been useless after people had washed hands with it. He gives value to the water by changing it into wine. If we do not talk, our lives would be like this water which would have been used and thrown out afterwards. We would have no value. We need to speak out and motivate an action plan for our sons so that we become the good wine that Jesus made out of water. Wine helps the stomach and it also lifts up people's spirits. This is what we want, to say things we would not be able to say without wine. It is my plea to sons and fathers. We are prompting you. We have run out of wine and we ask you to make changes. We are not saying that as women we are unable to make our own lives better, but we need your corporation in changing negative perceptions of women. I will just use an example of menstruation, which is a preparation for giving birth, but it has been misunderstood and labelled as dirty. How can something that symbolises life be seen as dirty?

I want to end here. Sons and fathers, we prompt you today. We are saying our lives are valueless water, we are asking you to do something so that we can be wine that lifts people's spirits.

Evaluation and Challenges

Prof Jim Cochrane

I have been asked to do a reflection for both ISB and Worker Ministry. I will start with the Worker Ministry. I think the strengths of the Worker Ministry projects lies in its link with the ISB. This link is very vital. I also think that the support from others who are working in the field of Church and Work seems a very important strength. The base provided by the University is a vital legitimising base. It adds legitimation at some level for different things. I think the teaching program which is extending in various directions of teaching the clergy is also very important. Finally the obvious strength without which the project would not work is the link with workers in congregations.

The two weaknesses I offer thoughts on are that I wonder if the educational methods are sufficiently participatory. I sensed, in what I have been seeing, a strong undercurrent of wanting to give direction as opposed to getting direction from the group. It seems to me that this is one place where the link with ISB and its method may be helpful for the Worker Ministry. The second weakness is the question of whether the leadership of the Worker Ministry is perhaps too strong and located in one person. It was noticeable to me how much Mzwandile directed things this weekend compared to the way in which the ISB staff and not the Director controlled that part of it. It remains a question for me.

In terms of opportunities I think the link with others in other parts of Africa could be extremely important, provided that South Africans are not perceived as controlling such engagements. South Africans are often seen as arrogant leaders in other parts of Africa. The other opportunity is in a form of a question: What about Worker Sunday Campaign being turned into a Worker Week? It seems to me that restricting this campaign to a worship service is far too limiting. There should be many activities in the church around the whole week if it is really going to make an impact in a local congregation.

Regarding ISB, I think the strengths are that it has a strong facilitating method which has been evident this weekend in a wide range of leadership capacities being brought up. In my view it is quite stunning. There is a strong joint leadership and good national and international impact.

There is also a rooting in a theological education program which therefore impacts upon the future church leadership. I think that it is crucial that ISB does not give up that rooting whatever the temptations may be to move away from it and there are some. Finally the wide links to other groups and to local communities is obviously a strength.

I will mention three weaknesses. I am sorry that Gerald is not here to hear this. I want to say that there is lack of obvious strong support from the School of Theology; this is a crucial weakness. Besides the head of the school who was here only briefly, I ask myself, "where were they all this weekend?" This becomes a serious question if I am also saying that the rooting in such a programme is important. Secondly, I think that ISB needs the development of others who can fulfil the kind of intellectual role that Gerald West provides to strengthen the research component of ISB. Finally, I think ISB's interaction with other South African university-based projects is insufficient. I sometimes have the feeling that ISB puts more efforts in linking with other universities in other parts of the world than it does in South Africa. I know the sensitivities around that issue but I still feel that way. Thank you very much.

Ms. Welekazi Sokuthu, Umtata Women's Group

We will start with strengths. The first strength is the fact that ISB/Worker Ministry deals with contemporary issues that affect people's lives daily. They have great outreach to the communities which means that they are not centralised. The fact that they are based at the University, working within the School of Theology, is a strength which ensures the continuity of ISB work because of students' involvement. The students extend the work of ISB when they finish their studies as we have heard from ex-interns. We also saw international connections as a strength.

We thought of one weakness which is lack of sufficient communication. Speaking for our group, we feel there are times where we do not hear anything from ISB for a long period of time. On opportunities, we felt that there are opportunities that ISB needs to explore, for instance there is this a contemporary dialogue amongst universities. We feel that ISB can explore, this opportunity of inter university dialogue to engage ISB to similar programs.

We also felt that the international connections of ISB are the opportunities whereby ISB can assist in organising scholarships so that local youth can further their studies. Finally, we felt that ISB can develop the members of the communities that they work with to the point of having them engage in theological studies at a university level.

Jan Bjane Soedal, Norway

The strength of ISB is that people speak for themselves, as many of you have said. The incredible strength is in the method that you use where you come with questions and people find answers for themselves. This point is linked with the obvious appreciation of the communities that you work with. The way you read the Bible seems to be a real strength. There is something about this methodology that seems to function very well. The reflection on action that Gerald was talking about is caused by the link between the University and communities which is very good. The last point is the action plan and that is to put into practice. What you have learnt on issues like Aids is also a real strength. I hand over to Eric who will report on weaknesses.

Rev Eric Anum, Glasgow

On weaknesses we felt that there is a need to open up the continual critique of how the process is run. There is a feeling that people do not feel confidence about how they can continually critique what is happening because they are afraid that it might affect their relationship with ISB. We also felt that there should be a way of weaning groups from depending on ISB. ISB also needs to deal with racial issues, as outsiders we sense that there is still a racial gap, yet nothing is being said. The other thing we noticed is that ISB methodology is clear but facilitation is not clear.

On opportunities, we talked about revisiting the issue of power relationships so that there can be a genuine dialogue. We felt that ISB needs to widen its voice without fear. We feel that ISB can move to other areas of Africa. It has been accepted in Glasgow. Thank you.

Women from Nxamalala, Sobantu and Empangeni

We feel that ISB's attitude is positive and pleasant. They are approachable. On weaknesses, we feel that it focuses on urban areas and neglects the rural areas. Empangeni has only been visited once and this area needs the Bible studies that will minister to people who are living with HIV. We also think that ISB's women facilitators should not wear trousers when they visit elderly people because old people would not feel that you can teach them anything good wearing trousers. On opportunities, we

think that ISB must try to inform church leaders so that the members of the church can be allowed to have Bible studies. ISB must advertise itself to the people. We feel that there is a strong need for ISB to have occasions where all the groups can get together and know each other. Thank you.

Phuthi Phaleng, Johannesburg Group

The strengths are that ISB empowers the students who are involved with it. The fact that it contextualises is also important. The weaknesses are the lack of communication. There is no newsletters, reports which update ISB's associates and follow-ups after conferences. There is no acknowledgement of groups that have been used on certain publications. On opportunities, we felt expansion should start nationally and to the continent and abroad. We also mentioned the threats. Churches can be a threat to ISB in that those who have been empowered with ISB tend to be a threat to the church leaders and in turn the churches become suspicious of ISB. That is all, thank you.

Nomfusi Mlangeni, Imbali

I think ISB needs to involve the youth in its programme. It seems that it is concentrating on adults; it is evident by lack of youth amongst us here. Youth is affected by most issues like rape and Aids. You need to invite them on workshops both at the university and local communities. I am covered. I love ISB.

Closing Word of Thanks

Rev Malika Sibeko

It is always nice to meet, but painful to say goodbye. May I ask you to thank the groups that you are representing back home on behalf of ISB and also your families. You have spent three days with us, away from your families. We thank your families for allowing you to come. ISB would not survive without you. We have taken seriously all that you have said to us.

We will look at it as ISB and take actions. I just want to say that ISB in this way only meets once in two years and I want to say to you that you should not wait for that time. You should ask what is going on. You can write and call us. You can also give us feedback about what is going on in your groups because that will enable us to compile the news of all the groups and send them back as updated newsletters which then inform you about what is it that the groups are doing. I also want to apologise for the unfulfilled promises we made at the last Biannual Workshop. We promised to send you reports but we never did. This is one of our weaknesses, which is to make empty promises.

Lastly, I really just want to thank you. It has been a really interesting three days. Like in the Bible, I feel like we should build tents and dwell here. What I liked the most is that you have been very truthful to us. This helps us grow. Your constructive criticism shows that you love ISB. Have a safe journey home and may God bless you.