



Mozambiquan Pastor Seeks Help

How to commend SEAN – an example from Africa

DON FORD, Chaplain for World Relief (USA version of TEAR Fund) met a Pastor from Mozambique who wants to start a training programme for pastors and leaders. He sent Don an outline proposal for a Spiritual Formation Manual. Don replied:

Dear Brother

It was a joy to meet you and to discover your burning passion for helping those very many rural pastors who labour for God's glory, often with few resources, little Bible training and only limited knowledge of Christian discipleship.

Regarding the outline of the course material you are suggesting, I find myself echoing what was expressed by others when we met. Is there an appropriate balance in the outline to teach about the Person of the Godhead (the Father) and His attributes and character? Then also, what is the place in your outline for studying the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, which is at the very heart of the New Testament, underlined for us in not one, but four gospels?

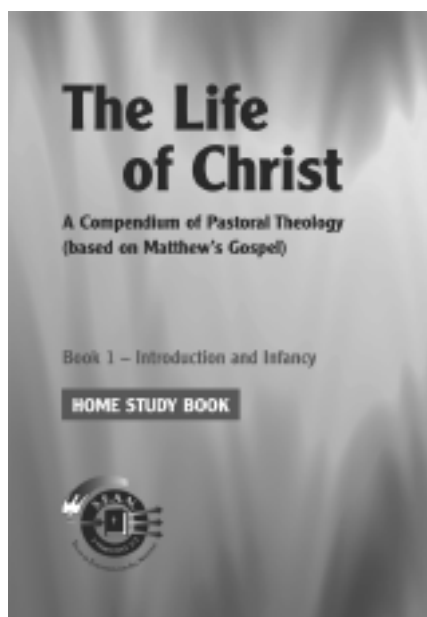
You will doubtless remember that in our brief conversation I mentioned the existence of specially prepared Programmed Teaching Materials written precisely for training rural pastors who have very little or no formal Bible training or theological preparation, issued by SEAN ("Study by Extension for All Nations"). I have seen these materials wonderfully used to transform the ministries of huge numbers of rural pastors in Spanish-speaking countries in South America. I have witnessed the results among Quechua pastors in the High Andes of Peru. And I believe that the materials have been adapted and used in similar situations in Brazil – so they are already translated into Portuguese.

There are a number of basic courses, based on parts of the Bible, where each student has his own study book and the Group Leader has a special Training Manual. *The Life of Christ* (based on Matthew's gospel) is divided into six study books. The student studies an hour a day (5 hours per week) and then

they meet together regularly with the group leader/tutor/teacher about every two weeks. There they go over all the studies they have completed since the previous joint session, discussing and clarifying points of interest or difficulty, and checking their progress together. It's really quite a wonderful system of training for these rural pastors.

Seeing the amount of work and time you are investing into preparing the *Spiritual Formation Manual*, I suppose that, at the back of my mind, I was trying to think of others that we know of across the world who have shared a similar burden to yourself, and who have done some hard work on preparing materials for the same objective. Obviously, none of us wants to run the risk of 're-inventing the wheel'!

A masterly commendation of SEAN! Let's pray SEAN is brought to the attention of others with a similar 'burning passion' to help those who labour.



SEAN's *Life of Christ*, Book 1



Two leaders accompanying Terry Barratt in Myanmar and Taiwan for SEAN workshops planned for September/October

Fuelling Evangelism in South Africa

Dr Elisabeth Ling, Africa Representative, iThemba AIDS Foundation writes:

In many African communities, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has brought a sense of despair and meaninglessness. I'm based in Port Elizabeth, where in some areas every household is affected and it's a fact of life that it's the young people, rather than the old who die these days. In the face of such tragedy, with little likelihood of immediate relief, there is a sense that people are ready to receive the sort of hope that only comes from Christ. It's therefore an 'exciting' context for evangelism. And SEAN is helping effective discipleship to fuel that evangelism.

I came across the *Abundant Life* material. A local Xhosa lady and I are using it with a group of volunteer caregivers – the ones who offer counselling, nursing and care for the sick and dying in their homes, as well as supporting their families. We hope that by encouraging these ladies in their faith, the message of Jesus will get through to those whom they're caring for. We plan to start using it with the other groups we're involved with around Port Elizabeth once it's translated into Xhosa (see below).

Gloria Dean has since reported: we're just in the process of signing an agreement for Translation and Production in South Africa, in the Xhosa language.



The Work in Russia Grows

IN JANUARY this year, SEAN UK hosted a two-week workshop at Axminster, Devon for delegates from across the world. The aim was to share the vision for use of SEAN materials and how to develop programmes to disciple thousands of students. Amongst the delegates were two teams from the Magadan region and Vladivostok in the far east of Russia. Michael Huggins of Oxen Ministries UK attended the first regional seminars in that area to support and advise on the training. Extracts from his reports reveal

very interested in the goals of the SEAN training programme. The reason is that he is very concerned about the gap between church and society with its serious problems of marriage breakdowns, high divorce rate, abortion, drugs, alcohol and the problem of homeless children. He strongly believes that the church has a duty to bridge the gap, and if necessary, pay the price that may be required to heal the sick, aid the poor and help those in prison. The church can too easily be distracted by the latest movement, one being

that of church planting, and he questioned how effective that particular movement had been. The Bishop took the communist example, we should “train and penetrate” rather than just fill churches. But to do so he recognised the need to train potential volunteers in the Bible, for the volunteers were there, but they need help – God’s help to harness their willingness and spirit. The

Bishop came later to the seminars. Michael also met Father Michael, the Roman Catholic minister, an old and respected friend to all, a man with a true pastor’s heart. He too now wishes his people to train within the SEAN programme as he is convinced by what he has observed already that it will thrust them into



Showing Magadan and Vladivostok



View across the city of Magadan (photo: Michael Huggins)

that already lessons learnt in Axminster are being applied:

Anneta Vysotskaya and Vera Sapojnikova gave the vision, the leadership and the training. Some 13 churches were represented among the participants of the three-day seminars. The Lutheran churches participated, including a couple doing valuable work in the prisons. There are some 70 registered SEAN students already in the regional prisons – which must make these places of detention possibly one of the few indigenously financially sustainable residential Bible college systems in Russia!

Plans by the committees of Magadan and Vladivostok include further translations of courses, the much-needed editing of the existing Russian SEAN TEE material, printing policies, introductory seminars for church leaders, plus a demanding tutor-training programme, all of which are itemised into detailed three-year budgets submitted by the two committees. Axminster must be really encouraged!

Michael met Gennady Ivkov, the Baptist Bishop of Primorye who is

service within a very needy community, although he is of course aware of certain historic doctrinal differences.

Other snippets from Vera: In Ussuriysk eleven churches participated in seminars – 26 tutors receiving certificates. Many people want to organize groups in their own churches. There are two groups in Chernigovka and two in Retikhovka with 30 students in total. At least four groups are at work in Vladivostok. In one village 21 students have applied to train. The New Life Radio station at Magadan (see map) will be broadcasting the Focus Radio adaptations of four of the SEAN courses, with twice-weekly broadcasts over a three-year period. Generous financial help through Focus Radio will enable these programmes to start September this year.

Anneta is now completing the translation of ‘the Bible Encounter Manual’. Her work will include the remaining 45 lessons on ‘Growth and Pastoral Care’ for discipling believers plus the explanatory notes and the biblical and topical indices.



Journalists and Manager of New Life Radio with staff of the group using the SEAN TEE materials in Russia (photo: Michael Huggins)



Moving News from China

TEE Movers began in 1999 as a mission project of Pneuma Chapel, a Christian & Missionary church in southern California. Their goal is to equip Chinese Christians and thereby raise up future leaders of the Chinese Church, primarily in mainland China – by the use of TEE (Theological Education by Extension) using SEAN materials.

TEE Movers have translated SEAN material into Chinese and introduced it through a series of workshops. Below is a report from the ninth and tenth workshops. Praise God for the rapid spread of the use of SEAN throughout mainland China.

Bountiful harvest in the fields

The ninth workshop was held in S city in mainland China in early April this year. It was attended by 13 missionaries working with Chinese Christians. The highlight was testimonies by three Chinese Christians who came to the workshop at the request of a missionary named Peace. Peace has taught SEAN classes to well over 300 Chinese Christians. The three Christians are currently leading 13 SEAN study groups, comprising a total of 191 students. Most of these students are house church leaders. When they complete their training next year, they will organise and lead their own SEAN study groups. By this time next year, it's expected that more than 1000 students will be being taught by these 191 students!

Everybody listening to the testimonies was praising the Lord! The seeds Peace had sown are now abundantly bearing fruit. It has not been possible to track the progress of all of Peace's other students, but we are confident that they are carrying out the same great work. It is estimated that several thousand Chinese Christians are now studying SEAN in mainland China.

We moved to X city for the 10th workshop. Another

Christian brother came to the workshop and gave his testimony. He was Peace's student who came to X city to witness for Jesus Christ to Muslims in X city. During the day, he drives a bicycle-cab to support his family, witnessing to locals. In the evening, he leads SEAN study groups. The workshop participants sobbed quietly as they listened to this brother's testimony, which revealed his unwavering dedication to the Lord despite significant hardship.

We also met another missionary named Andre. He was one of the 14 who attended the first workshop held in 1999. He started his first SEAN class in X city. Chinese Christians in his class were deeply influenced by his exemplary Christian lifestyle. Other Christians in that community noticed and begged him to start another SEAN class. So far he has led a total of five SEAN study groups. Many of his students are already leading SEAN among the minority groups, who live mainly in western China.

It was most exciting to see that SEAN is now being spread by Chinese Christians, without the need of missionary hands. Chinese Christians now train other Chinese Christians, proving that the biblical principle in II Timothy 2:2 is working in China. Praise the Lord!

In the USA as well

SEAN is being introduced to Chinese churches in the USA. The vision is to see Chinese Christians living abroad, after being trained by SEAN, go to mainland China and lead groups in their own language and

cultural context.

So far four churches have started SEAN: Petra Vineyard Church (Orange, California), Evangelical Formosan Church of Cerritos (Buena Park, California), Chinese Evangelical Church of San Diego (California), and Abundant Life Chinese Mennonite Church (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

More Good News for China

SEAN worked with the original author George Patterson of the *Train & Multiply* material, later handing it over to Project WorldReach who use it as the basis of all their teaching. Director Lloyd Niles wrote recently about their work in China:

"Praise God we witnessed over 100 young people accepting our Lord at three English camps this Summer. Another English Camp team is going into Guangdong province. Elsewhere a variety show is planned to be held outdoors in City A in a factory. Thirty five brothers and sisters are to perform ethnic dances and songs – and will share with the workers. Next week our consulting team will go to City B to work again. The Train and Multiply team meets later for a dedication service for the Level One material in Hong Kong. It will be the first time we can all meet and pray together."

Encouragement Needed in France

STUART BEAUMONT is translating SEAN texts into French, but is not sure how to get them into use. He reports:

We live in a vast, relatively unevangelized area, so something clearly ought to be done to ensure that the Gospel is "shed abroad" here. Demand for courses in French comes mainly from African countries. We continue to receive encouraging news regarding SEAN/TEE from elsewhere in the world – in Nepal, Mongolia and Mali for

instance... but in a way this makes the total indifference in French-speaking Europe even more discouraging. But we are conscious of a need to plod on, because one day French-speaking Europe might just suddenly wake up to the fact that these courses could be a major factor in the development of her churches!!

Stuart goes on to list progress with translation of six courses at present in hand, and several more planned over the next five years. Let's pray that his investment in time and

expertise will be used hugely by the Lord in coming years – and that Stuart will not be discouraged.

"Before you ask, I will answer you ...!" As this SPREAD was in its final stage of preparation, an enquiry was received from a SEAN user on behalf of a pastor who is heading to France as a missionary and is looking for TEE materials in French. He asked "Do you use them or know of someone we could contact about them?" Praise God! Could this be the encouragement our friends in France need?

Teach others... that they may teach

**SEAN International Trustee
Katie Lefroy writes:**

MARY MULROY was part of the first group in Eastbourne, England to complete *The Life of Christ*. Before she had finished it, she began to teach others using SEAN courses. Mary is now in a Community Church in Eastbourne and still using SEAN courses. Recently she had an interesting challenge and I think she is the first to have a tutorial group in UK and Sweden simultaneously. Mary tells the story:

"The *Abundant Life* course I was running was "on hold" because of a new addition to Darren and Vickie's family. It seemed the only way to continue was for me to go to their home, half an hour's journey away and in the evening! Not to my liking at all – but I knew it was right, so I agreed.

"Darren phoned early in the day I was due to be with them. He asked if we could include Johann from Sweden via the internet. I answered rather tersely that we would discuss this later. I really do not like computers. When I arrived at their flat, Vickie explained that Johann had been interested in Darren's love of the Lord and he wanted to know more about God! Again I knew it was just right.

"So, there I was, all wired up, leading lesson number nine to Darren, Vickie and baby in England and Johann in Sweden. The Lord just took over; I have never felt so led by Him. A few days later, Darren phoned me to say that Johann had invited the Lord into his life. After several more lessons he told us he wants to be baptised."

Paul wrote to Timothy: Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim... and entrust them to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2 GNB. And so by many means, the Lord continues to bring people to Himself.



Mary Mulroy, with ear phones, talking to Johann in Sweden and doing Abundant Life with Darren and Vickie in Eastbourne

A Great Vision for Mongolia

GRAHAM AYLETT keeps us up to date with the work of MSTEE – the Mongolian School for Theological Education by Extension. See Mongolia on map on page 2.

A recent assembly of around 170 leaders of churches and Christian organisations, agreed the following Vision Statement: *'We the Mongolian Church, will make Mongolia, and Mongolians scattered through the world, Christ's disciples, and take the Good News of the Kingdom to all nations.'* Associated with this Vision was the verse Psalm 144.15: *'...blessed are the people whose God is the LORD.'*

Discipling a whole nation, what a great vision! In the wake of this assembly, we are asked to pray that MSTEE will know how to work to meet the requests that they are receiving from the churches.

Four staff visited Huvsgul, the most northerly province, to meet with leaders of the churches there. Others from the Training Section visited church leaders in Arkhangai province, about 10 hours drive to the west of the capital. These meetings are to introduce the SEAN programme, and explain how it can help the local church to disciple new believers and train leaders.

A Tutor Training Workshop was held in the South Gobi province of Mongolia. A major church there has seen real growth recently. Including children, young people and adults, there are around 400 who attend. Last year, they built a new church building themselves in just 30 days, a great talking point among church members and onlookers alike. They have seen the healing work of God as they pray, and now regularly receive requests to come and pray for sick family members from townspeople.

Elsewhere in Mongolia, some reflections from Uranchimeg a 17-year-old student after she had finished the Foundation course, *Abundant Life*: *"I used to insult people with bad language a great deal. After I became a believer, and studied the chapter on repentance in Abundant Life, I asked forgiveness from God, and made a commitment not to do this. Another thing – one day my younger brother was seriously ill – for one whole day he was lying unconscious and seized up – there were only the two of us there, and I kept on praying all the time. The next day he was fine."*

"I used to worry about all sorts of things, for example, 'Where will the money come from?' 'I wish I could get decent clothes!' but having studied the chapter on 'God's family', I'm peaceful, and now am not anxious about anything."

Praise God for changes in people's lives like these.

Please Pray – and tell others!

OUR GRATEFUL thanks go to readers and churches who continue to support SEAN's world-wide work through prayer and giving. Please be encouraged by what you read here.

Our aim is to equip you to persevere in prayer – and as you are able, to support financially the work of writing, translation, design, production and distribution. As you have opportunity please tell others of SEAN's work – maybe pass this newsletter to your magazine editor or commend it to a friend. Thank you.

Who to contact for what

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See also the excellent and informative web site www.sean.uk.net