

# Bible Knowledge Teaching in Tanzania

## Summary of report from Coordinator of Bible Knowledge, Diocese of Kagera

The Rev Josias Buneye, Coordinator of Bible Knowledge (BK) for the Diocese of Kagera (Anglican Church of Tanzania), recently provided a report in Swahili. His report also covered activities in the relatively new Diocese of Biharamulo, which does not as yet have its own BK coordinator. The following is a summary of Rev Buneye's report, with some additional clarifications.

Two seminars were held for school teachers and pastors teaching BK. One in the Diocese of Kagera on 8th September (26 attended) and another in the Diocese of Biharamulo on 5th October (14 attended). These seminars covered progress, challenges and suggestions relating to BK teaching.

### PROGRESS

The good news is that the number of teachers and schools teaching BK increased in 2018, as shown below (including the Diocese of Biharamulo, formerly part of the Diocese of Kagera until July 2017).

	2016	2017	2018
Number of schools	17	23	33
Number of pastors teaching	18	14	15
Number of school teachers	0	24	35
Number of Form 1 students	1,700	2,293	1,923
Number of Form 2 students	0	1,495	681
Number of Form 3 students	0	0	385
Number of Form 4 students*	0	0	37
Number of Bibles in schools	2,000	2,255	About 2,400
Number of BK student notes (textbooks) in schools	2,000 Form 1 (initial photocopies)	3,400 Form 1&2 (1 <sup>st</sup> printed version)	F1=2000, F2=1000, F3=1800, F4=1100

\* The diocesan BK program is only in its third year, but one school was already teaching BK before the program started, so it has students doing Form 4 this year.

It can be seen that while the number of schools and teachers has increased, the overall number of students has decreased to about 3000, for the following reasons.

- Some students find the additional study (of doing an optional subject) is too difficult for them.
- Some students lose interest, or are persuaded by others to stop studying BK.
- Students in two schools (Nyakahura and Shunga) had to abandon the course when their BK teachers moved and were not replaced.

While the decrease in students is unfortunate, what is more important is that the program is reaching more schools and more government teachers are involved, hence providing more opportunities for additional *committed* students to take part (at minimal additional cost to the program).

## CHALLENGES (identified during the seminars)

- Some headmasters do not view BK as an important subject and are discouraging students from studying it, probably to improve academic performance in core subjects. This has resulted in some students dropping BK.
- Some headmasters are stopping teachers from teaching BK on the grounds that those teachers have not studied BK themselves. These headmasters fail to see that all the lessons are prepared in the BK textbooks and any competent teacher can deliver them adequately.
- Some government school teachers are basing their BK teaching too much on personal Christian experience and not enough on the textbooks, which is not helpful in preparing for exams.
- Not many government teachers are volunteering to teach BK, resulting in only one or two teachers teaching BK in any given school, so they carry a heavy teaching load (including their core subjects).
- Motivation for government teachers to teach BK remains a challenge, partly due to the above point, and partly because some teachers expect financial incentives to teach BK.
- The national exams are based on the RSV Bible, while the textbooks use the Good News Bible. This is confusing for students and teachers. (See comments by Andy Bennett near the end.)
- Sometimes pastors teaching BK are relocated by their diocese and are not replaced by a pastor able to teach BK (i.e. one with a diploma in theology), leaving the students without a BK teacher. This particularly happened in late 2017, when the Diocese of Biharamulo was established and many pastors moved between this new diocese and their former Diocese of Kagera. While the Bishops of Kagera and Biharamulo were made aware of this issue at the time, they were not always able to resolve all the conflicting requirements under consideration when re-locating pastors.

## SUGGESTIONS (from the seminars)

- Government officials (District Education Officers), headmasters and school teachers should be invited to presentations on BK to raise awareness of what is involved and the benefits.
- Government teachers wishing to teach BK should be given a short course and a certificate to identify them as being capable of teaching BK.
- BK students should be encouraged in various ways. For example they could receive some kind of award when they do well in BK exams. Also there should be a BK club in each school for students to discuss BK issues. (Note: perhaps this could be combined with the UKWATA branch in each school – the Tanzanian Students' Christian Fellowship.)
- Teachers need to meet with one another regularly to discuss BK issues, and the coordinator should visit more often to keep informed about developments in schools.
- The coordinator and diocesan management should visit schools to talk with school principals to encourage them to support BK.
- The diocesan secretary and BK coordinator should visit District Education Officers to encourage them to promote BK in schools.

## SCHOOL VISITS

In October 2018, the coordinator visited all 20 BK schools in the Diocese of Kagera, and the 13 BK schools in the Diocese of Biharamulo, to deliver books for 2019, to encourage teachers and students, and to meet with headmasters to get their advice on BK. He also visited the Diocese of Lweru and the Diocese of Mara, to exchange ideas with their coordinators about expanding the teaching of BK. Here are some of the comments from these visits.

- BK helps to improve the schools where it is taught (especially by improving student behaviour).

- The church should allocate a pastor to each BK school to be a chaplain and to provide specialist advice for teaching BK.
- In the Diocese of Biharamulo, the number of schools teaching BK is increasing because there are more devoted teachers.
- BK should be taught using the RSV Bible, especially for forms 2-4 because the exams are based on it. (See comments by Andy Bennett near the end, for another solution.)
- Government teachers who teach BK should be given a short refresher course to help them to teach it well, rather than using their own Christian experience.
- The reporting system (on BK academic performance) is too general. There should be a mid year report and another one at the end of the year when all the exams are completed.
- BK teachers should receive some kind of incentive from time to time.
- BK students who complete form 4 should receive a certificate signed by their bishop, even if they don't pass the exam. This may help them with further studies and/or to teach BK in future.
- BK textbooks should also be produced for forms 5 and 6 (currently they cover forms 1 to 4).

## RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COORDINATOR

1. Need to print more textbooks for forms 1 and 2 by January if possible. (Current stocks are: Form 1 = 20, Form 2 = 0, Form 3 = 1164, Form 4 = 880, Good News Bibles = 784. The Rev Judy Cale at St Philip's Theological College in Kongwa was sent 80 copies of Form 3 books and 70 copies of Form 4 books for use in teaching pastors how to teach BK.)
2. Produce textbooks for forms 5 and 6 in 2019 if possible.
3. The Diocese should provide a short course for BK teachers (a few days to a week), with a certificate to help them to get approval from their headmasters to teach BK, and to teach it well. This course should be run during the mid term break in April 2019 if possible.
4. Produce textbooks using the RSV Bible for 2019 if possible, for forms 2 to 4.
5. BK teachers should receive some kind of incentive, to encourage them.
6. The Diocese of Bharamulo should appoint their own BK coordinator, because the coordinator for the Diocese of Kagera has too much work. (He is also the Coordinator of Mission and Evangelism, and at the time of the report was responsible for a parish.)
7. BK teachers should be given the "Bible Gear" books to help them, as used in the diocese of Mara.

## BIBLE KNOWLEDGE EXAM RESULTS

The Bible Knowledge Terminal Exam Results for June 2018 are in Attachment A, as provided by Rev Buneye. The results are not complete because some schools have not yet provided results to the coordinator. Also, two schools (Nyakahura and Shunga) are no longer teaching BK because teachers have moved. However, it can be seen that:

- About 75% of BK students in Forms 1 and 2 passed their exams, and 85% of students in Form 3. This is an excellent outcome, especially considering the challenges that many teachers and students experience.
- About half the teachers are achieving a pass rate of 80 to 100% which demonstrates their excellent commitment and it also shows that the teaching materials are adequate.

While this outcome is very pleasing, one must remember that these exams were set and marked by the teachers, and the more important exams are the Form 2 and Form 4 national exams set and marked each year by the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA), which count towards the students' Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE).

## DIOCESAN COMMITTEES FOR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Rev Buneye also advised that a Bible Knowledge Committee has been established for the Diocese of Kagera, and another for the Diocese of Biharamulo. The purpose of these committees is to assist the coordinator in dealing with local issues relating to BK. The committees include pastors and government school teachers.

## Comments on the above by Andy Bennett

It is extremely encouraging to see the great commitment of the coordinator and most of the BK teachers which, together with the hard work of most students, has resulted in 75% of all the students passing their mid-year BK exams in 2018. One can only hope that they will do well in the national exams. In 2017 our students sat their first NECTA Form 2 BK exam and only 21% passed of the 922 who sat the exam. While this was disappointing, one must remember that these were our first students, mostly taught by pastors with no previous teaching experience, and 515 of those who failed were in five large classes of 80 to 150 students. Our experience and materials are improving and, God willing, so will our results.

It was great that BK teachers (including pastors) had the opportunity to attend seminars to be encouraged and to discuss BK issues. Many thoughtful suggestions came from those seminars about potential improvements to the BK program. Additional suggestions came from discussions the coordinator had with headmasters as he visited each school, and from the coordinator himself. Here are some comments on the main suggestions and recommendations.

- **Printing more BK books.** Currently the BK program has only 20 Form 1 books and has run out of Form 2 books. This creates problems when new schools ask for books to start teaching BK (it can take months to print more books). The coordinator should keep stock records of books, and should report these every three months to Andy Bennett (who at the time was managing printing). Currently, arrangements are being made to print more Form 1 and 2 books.
- **Encouraging BK students.** Those students who show that they are serious about studying BK should be encouraged and assisted to keep going and to get better exam results. This can be done by awarding BK books according to how well students have performed in exams. For example, students who get a grade 'A' in their end-of-year BK exam could be given a BK book for the next form, and students who pass the BK Form 2 NECTA exam could be given a BK Form 3 book. Students who start BK Form 4 could be given the Form 4 book by the school, and the coordinator could provide replacement books to the school later in the year. Students who complete BK Form 4 should get a certificate signed by their bishop, in addition to any NECTA certificate. Most schools have UKWATA branches – these should be encouraged to have regular meetings on BK, if it is taught at their school.
- **BK courses with certificates for teachers.** This is a good idea. Rev Judy Cale has been training pastors how to teach BK, at St Philip's Theological College in Kongwa. The coordinator should talk to her urgently (she is returning to Australia soon) about adapting her training materials to develop a short course for BK teachers. Then each diocese (Kagera, Biharamulo and Lweru) should be asked to run such a course once a year at its Bible college, with costs covered by the BK program. But the course can only be a few days, otherwise it will be too expensive.
- **Incentives for teachers.** This is a great challenge. On the one hand, many teachers work very hard to teach BK and some achieve excellent academic performance with their students, so they are certainly worthy of recognition. On the other hand, life in Tanzania is hard and the recognition that people really want is financial reward, but giving meaningful performance bonuses to all worthy BK teachers would cost more than the program can afford (especially when the number of teachers increases much more). It is really important that whatever incentives are offered can be financially sustained for the long term, because the effect on teacher motivation could be terrible if the incentives had to be stopped when they became too expensive. Also, incentives need to be seen to be fair and, in particular, should not discriminate against BK teachers who have large classes but despite their hard work a high proportion of their students fail. So perhaps a realistic compromise could be a combination of non-financial and financial incentives like:

- ✓ A Good News Bible awarded by the coordinator to each teacher who has completed one year of BK teaching. (Currently there are 784 GN Bibles in stock.) The Bibles used by most teachers belong to their school, so this would be their own personal copy.
- ✓ A certificate from the bishop to each BK teacher when they first have students passing NECTA Form 2 BK exams. This would usually be after the teacher's second year of BK teaching. This could be awarded at the next available BK seminar. And the same for teachers when they first have students passing NECTA Form 4 BK exams (usually after the fourth year of BK teaching).
- ✓ A 'long service' award for those who have been teaching BK for five years. The award could include a certificate from the bishop and Tsh100,000 (one hundred thousand Tanzanian shillings, about AUD60). The estimated cost of this award would be as follows: end 2020 = Tsh 1.5m (AUD 900), end 2021 = Tsh 0.5m (AUD 300), end 2022 = Tsh 1m (AUD 600), and about Tsh 1m (AUD 600) each year after that for every 10 new teachers joining the program, which is sustainable.
- **BK teacher meetings.** Usually the coordinator visits all BK schools in Sep/Oct to deliver books for the following year, and every year or two there is a seminar for teachers during the mid-year break (July). These visits and seminars usually provide two opportunities each year for teachers to discuss BK issues with the coordinator and/or with other BK teachers, but teachers are looking for more opportunities to share ideas. Perhaps each BK teacher could be encouraged to meet once a year with one or two other BK teachers from nearby schools. Also, the coordinator could phone each BK teacher in March or April, to encourage and discuss how things are going. Diocesan Management should encourage parish pastors to become chaplains in their local schools, and to meet regularly with any BK teachers to clarify any theological issues.
- **Regular reporting.** The coordinator should ask all BK teachers to provide exam results twice a year (after mid-year and end-of-year exams) for exams run by the schools. The coordinator should also get the NECTA results (from their website) for schools involved in BK Form 2 & 4 exams. A summary of all this information should be provided to Andy Bennett for donors.
- **BK presentations to headmasters.** This is a good idea. Headmasters have regular meetings in each district. The coordinator should look for opportunities to give brief presentations at these meetings (jointly with a member of Diocesan Management, if available) to promote BK. The coordinator should talk to District Education Officers to arrange this.
- **BK teachers leaving and not being replaced.** This was a particular problem in late 2017 when the Diocese of Biharamulo was established and many pastors had to move, including some who were teaching BK. Hopefully this will not be happening again for a long time. Sometimes government teachers also move, and it can be difficult to get an existing teacher to take over BK in that school. To address this challenge, when new schools join the program they should have two teachers willing to share the work of teaching BK, so that if one leaves then the other one can continue. This will also help to reduce the additional workload for BK teachers.
- **Using the RSV Bible instead of Good News.** There has been much discussion about this in recent years. The RSV is used in NECTA exams because the BK syllabus mentions the RSV. The syllabus was developed by academics who used the RSV themselves, so they mentioned the RSV in the syllabus. (Canon Fareth Sendegeya can verify this.) This was a mistake, because they did not consider how difficult the RSV is for students and teachers who struggle with English. Changing our BK books to use the RSV would just be 'extending' this mistake. A better option is to try again to have the Good News version used in NECTA exams. **I will write to the Bishops of Kagera, Biharamulo and Lweru** (cc to Mara) asking them to propose to the House of Bishops that the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) be asked to write to the Ministry of Education, requesting that the Good News Bible be used in future NECTA BK exams.

- **Books for BK Forms 5 and 6.** There are about 4,770 secondary schools in Tanzania and we are only teaching in about 40 of them in Kagera, Biharamulo, Lweru and Mara. At this stage, we need to use our limited resources to get more schools to teach BK in Forms 1 to 4, to reach thousands more students throughout Tanzania. Perhaps later we can consider helping students to do BK in Forms 5 and 6, although the number of students is relatively low.
- **“Bible Gear” books.** The coordinator saw these being used in the Diocese of Mara, and thought that they could be helpful to our BK teachers. I had a look at these books in 2017. They were written by a Tanzanian academic. The main book has lessons and the RSV Bible, and the other gives questions and answers. The main book has too much material which is not in the syllabus. It also has contradictions, inaccuracies, and opinions with no apparent basis. Sometimes the English is misleading. It is not clear where syllabus topics start and end. Overall, it is confusing and difficult to use. The questions and answers book is more useful. I shared these comments with Helen Hoskins in 2017 and she totally agreed. They use the question and answers book at Bunda Girls Secondary School for ideas about exam questions, but in our program we provide exam questions to our teachers, which saves them work. The “Bible Gear” books are also expensive compared to our BK books. Our mid-year exam results show that many BK teachers are achieving a pass rate of 80 to 100% which demonstrates that our existing teaching materials are quite adequate. Therefore, I do not recommend the “Bible Gear” books for BK teachers, but I left a copy of each for the coordinator, as reference books.
- **Financial reporting.** The above report did not include any financial details. The coordinator should email a bank statement (covering three months) for the BK account four times a year (in March, June, September and December) to Andy Bennett, to assist with requesting financial support from donors. At the same time, the stock levels should be included for the BK books and Bibles, to help plan future printing and purchasing. A summary of the BK expenses should be provided twice a year (in June and December) covering the previous six months, to help assure donors that the funds are being well used.
- **Coordinator's workload.** Rev Buneye has been doing an amazing job in coordinating BK, especially considering that he is also coordinating Mission & Evangelism, and (at the time of the report) had a parish to run. But such a high workload is not good for Rev Buneye, and not good for BK. I fully support his request that the Diocese of Biharamulo should appoint their own coordinator for BK. (Note: this happened in 2019.) No doubt, he will continue to provide advice and teaching materials to the Diocese of Biharamulo, as he does with the Diocese of Lweru. It is good that Bible Knowledge Committees have been established in Kagera and Biharamulo to assist the coordinator with local issues. Also, I have asked CMS-Australia to try to send a missionary to Tanzania to coordinate BK nationally, in consultation with the Anglican Church of Tanzania. However, if this happens it may not be for a year or two.

In closing, I give thanks to God for the hard work of Rev Buneye and all the BK teachers, and I pray that the number of students passing NECTA Bible Knowledge exams will increase rapidly and that they will be strong in their faith.

Andy Bennett

Adelaide, 15 December 2018

## BIBLE KNOWLEDGE TERMINAL EXAM RESULTS – JUNE 2018

Grades (%): A = 75 – 100; B = 65 – 74; C = 45 – 64; D = 30 – 44; F = 0 – 29.

## FORM 1

NO	SCHOOL	DISTRCT	TEACHER	A	B	C	D	F	TOTAL	% PASSED
1	Mugoma	Ngara	Rev. Deogratias Sebastian	11	22	56	74	26	189	86
2	Rubondo	Biharamulo	Mwl. Honest Rugaimukamu	0	5	7	25	77	114	32
3	Sumae	Biharamulo	Rev. Alex Muhunda	5	2	4	7	5	23	78
4	Muganza	Ngara		6	11	25	22	17	81	79
5	Murusagamba	Ngara		3	7	29	16	22	77	71
6	Nyakisasa	Ngara	Rev. Ayubu Samwel	3	3	28	51	30	115	74
			Rev. Joseph Kalekezi							
7	Ntobeye	Ngara	Mwl. Cornald Lissu	21	5	9	6	17	58	71
8	Shunga	Ngara	Rev. Hosea Kishongo	0	0	15	25	21	61	66
9	Nyakahura	Biharamulo	Rev. Peter Paschal	x	x	x	x	x	x	
10	Mch. Mwema	Ngara	Madam Irene	2	1	2	2	1	8	88
11	Nyarutembo	Chato	Mwl. Baraka Angyelile	0	1	41	67	55	164	66
12	Chabalisa	Karagwe	Mwl. Essau Josiah							
13	Muyenzi	Ngara		x	x	x	x	x	x	
14	Lusahunga	Biharamulo	Mwl. Anord Mbanzendole							
15	Murongo	Kyerwa	Rev. Nathanael Makaka	0	1	1	15	16	33	52
16	Buzirayombo	Biharamulo								
17	Murgwanza	Ngara	Mwl. Mugisha Rukilizo	42	18	26	6	1	93	99
18	Kanazi	Ngara	Rev. Robert Boaz	17	17	49	16	3	102	97
19	Mabawe	Ngara	Rev. Samson Bisakumbwa	x	x	x	x	x	x	
20	Nyabisindu	Ngara	Rev. Aniceth Kanyawawa	4	2	11	14	3	34	91
			Mwl. Wizeye Gashaza							
21	Kirushya	Ngara	Mwl. Chrisant Wilbad	0	5	17	7	6	35	83
			Mwl. Paschal Cleoface, Valence Mjun							
			Josephat Katemba							
22	Rusumo A	Ngara	Moses Essopherent							
23	Kibimba	Ngara	Mwl. Erick Baranga	2	3	10	8	2	25	92
24	Nyantakala	Biharamulo								
25	Katoke	Biharamulo								
26	Ruziba	Biharamulo								
TOTAL				116	103	330	361	302	1212	75

## FORM 2

NO	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	TEACHER	A	B	C	D	F	TOTAL	% PASSED
1	Mabawe	Ngara	Rev. Samson Bisakumbwa	4	7	20	19	23	73	68
			Madam Kudra William							
			Madam Christina Mchomvu							
2	Muruvyagira	Ngara	Rev. Skot	6	6	10	6	10	38	74
			Rev. Joseph Kalekezi							
3	Ntobeye	Ngara	Mwl. Cornald Lissu	1	1	5	0	0	7	100
4	Shunga	Ngara	Rev. Hosea Kishongo	1	2	11	15	10	39	74
5	Nyakahura	Biharamulo	Rev. Peter Paschal							
6	Mch. Mwema	Ngara	Madam Irene	4	5	5	0	0	14	100
7	Murgwanza	Ngara	Mwl. Juma	7	4	20	8	12	51	76
8	Buzirayombo	Biharamulo								
9	Chabalisa	Karagwe								
10	Nyarutembo	Chato	Mwl. Baraka Angyelile	1	2	15	38	27	83	67
11	Lusahunga	Biharamulo	Mwl. Anord Mbanzendole							
12	Bwanga	Chato		9	5	10	2	3	29	90
13	Mulongo	Kyerwa	Mwl.	1	4	25	6	0	36	100
14	Buseresere	Chato	Rev. Erasto Rushongo	24	25	93	76	95	313	70
TOTAL				58	61	214	170	180	683	74

## FORM 3

NO	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	TEACHER	A	B	C	D	F	TOTAL	% PASSED
1	Nkwenda	Kyerwa	Can. Ellis Ikambuza	4	2	0	5	3	14	79
2	Rubondo	Biharamulo	Mwl. Joshua Samwel	6	8	33	19	16	82	80
3	Sumae	Chato	Rev. Alex Muhunda	7	1	6	5	1	20	95
4	Mabawe	Ngara	Rev. Samson Bisakumbwa	0	1	4	4	0	9	100
5	Muruvyagira	Ngara		0	0	3	2	4	9	56
			Rev. Joseph Kalekezi							
6	Ntobeye	Ngara	Mwl. Cornald Lissu	0	0	3	5	1	9	89
7	Shunga	Ngara	pending teacher	1	1	4	4	1	11	91
8	Nyakahura	Biharamulo	Rev. Peter Paschal	x	x	x	x	x	x	
9	Mch. Mwema	Ngara	Madam Irene	1	0	4	1	1	7	86
10	Lusahunga	Biharamulo		x	x	x	x	x	x	
11	Nyarutembo	Chato	Mwl. Baraka Angyelile	2	1	8	5	0	16	100
12	Buseresere	Chato	Rev. Erasto Rushongo							
13	Buzirayombo	Chato	Mwl.							
			Rev. Amani Omari							
14	Mulongo	Kyerwa	Mwl. Abeli Kalibwami	0	0	3	10	2	15	87
15	Kiruruma	Karagwe	Rev. Maclin Daniel	0	2	1	3	1	7	86
16	Lusahunga	Biharamulo	Mwl. Anord Mbanzendole							
17	Muyenzi	Ngara	Mwl. Daniel Kwilisha	4	4	8	10	13	39	67
18	Bwanga	Chato	Rev. Erasto Rushongo	20	11	10	2	0	43	100
TOTAL				45	31	87	75	43	281	85

## FORM 4

NO	SCHOOL	DISTRICT	TEACHER	A	B	C	D	F	TOTAL	% PASSED
1	Rubondo	Biharamulo	Joshua Samwel	1	1	4	2	29	37	22

GRAND TOTAL 220 196 635 608 554 2213 75