



INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & EQUIPPING MINISTRIES

Transforming churches one pastor at a time

July 2021

Dear ITEM Partner,

I came back from my most recent trip to Africa re-energized and feeling a little of what Caleb must have felt when he entered the promised forty years after Israel was initially turned back from entering the land due to unbelief. Here is what he said, "... Here I am today, 85 years old. I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. My strength for battle and for daily tasks is now as it was then. Now give me this hill country..." (Josh 14:10-12 HCSB)

This ministry is now 18 years old and we have made great progress in the area of pastoral training with a goal of seeing believers and churches transformed spiritually. But one mountain we have not been able to ascend is helping to train up a new generation of church leaders.

Forty percent of Africa's population is between 14-26 years of age. They are connected to the west and the world at large through the internet unlike the previous generation of church leaders. Because of that connection, they are beginning to ask the same questions about the relevance of the Bible today, whether Christianity is the only way, gender, and abortion like the younger generation here. They are also being told, by some, that Christianity is a white man's religion and some are looking for life's answers by taking up yoga and Buddhism.

For the past 5 plus years I have immersed myself in the area of apologetics, that is, preparing myself and others to answer the questions being asked about creation, the meaning of life, whether anything is always wrong or right, and what happens when this life ends. In recent years, as a great grandfather of two, I've been particularly interested in helping parents and youth prepare for what we are facing and will face as our culture continues to crumble as a result of the sexual revolution taking place.

Enter "Apologetics Kenya." In the past year, ITEM special assistant in Africa, Nathan Chiroma, has introduced me to this group. At the same time, I've been connected with a ministry near my home, in Oregon, (Eternal Impact) that has apologetics contacts in Rwanda and Uganda, and is interested in getting something started in East Africa. On this recent



Kevin Muriithi (right) is a leader in Apologetics Kenya. Steven Mzungu (center) is a friend who is interested in apologetics.

trip, God connected the dots and showed me a way forward.

I was asked to speak at an apologetics workshop in Nairobi. In preparation for that opportunity, I met with one of the leaders of Apologetics Kenya. After that meeting and after meeting many young Kenyan apologists online, it all came together. The platform to launch the ITEM Youth Ministry is apologetics. By partnering with Apologetics Kenya and Eternal Impact, we can play a roll in raising up young apologists that can go on high school and college campuses in East Africa, for now, and hopefully other places in Africa in the future.

So, as we are entering the transition of ITEM leadership phase, by bringing in a new director in the next two years, rather than stepping completely out of the picture, I prepare to only step aside and take on this new challenge and start ascending this ITEM-Youth Ministry mountain.

I will be 75 when we transfer the leadership of ITEM to new, more-than-capable hands. Caleb was 85 when he energetically proclaimed, "Give me this hill country." So, as long as God gives me health and strength, this will become my new focus. Please pray for ITEM and me, specifically, as we tackle this new challenge!

By His grace,



Dr. Stephen Van Horn
Founder/President

PRAYER

- ... The planning for the 2021 Banquet which is just getting started.
- ... Our teams in Africa which are still dealing with Covid
- ... Our teams in Africa that are in mentoring, that they will be effective in helping pastors apply what they have learned about equipping their members and being Bible expositors

ON THE HORIZON

- ... August 8 – 23, My next trip to Africa (Cameroon, Dem Rep of the Congo, Rwanda)
- ... The ITEM 2021 year end banquet, Nov 6