



INTERNATIONAL TRAINING & EQUIPPING MINISTRIES

Transforming Churches...One Pastor at a Time

September 2023

CELEBRATING TWENTY BLESSED YEARS!



Dear ITEM Partner

We are all familiar with the saying, “How time flies!” That often-spoken phrase has never been more meaningful to us than it is right now.

I remember so well my first trip to Africa in January 1998 to teach a class, surveying the letters of the Apostle Paul at the Nairobi International School of Theology. I went with feelings of uncertainty. But it ended up being a “hand in glove experience (there is another often quoted phrase).” I jokingly tell people, “During that first trip, I celebrated my 50th birthday, I had a midlife crisis, and became a missionary.” For the next five years I returned each January and August to teach various classes at the school.

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

During those early years, I started getting involved with my former students in their various countries. I helped plant churches in the Democratic Republic Congo. I started training pastors in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Rwanda.

THE EARLY GROWTH

In 2003, the school no longer needed adjunct professors and that is when I founded ITEM and developed our first seminar, The Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership (IFCL). At that point we were engaged in six countries. We appointed country coordinators, and they selected their team members. Pastors and educators here in the US volunteered to go with me, then on their own to help begin training our teams and pastors. Along the way, we trained the teams to conduct the seminars on their own. The number of countries grew to ten. Then twelve.

THOUSANDS TRAINED AND THE VISION EXPANDED

During these formative years, we conducted 10-15 IFCLs yearly and gave thousands of pastors a biblical and theological foundation upon which to build their ministries.

As our understanding of the needs in Africa became more clear, I developed a second seminar, The ITEM Conference on Ministry and Preaching (ICOMP), and started working on a mentoring syllabus, with my former student, Nathan Chiroma. The vision grew from providing a biblical and theological foundation, to seeing churches transformed through the ministry of the pastors we were training, who were becoming spiritual examples, equippers, and Bible expositors (the systematic teaching of the Scriptures).

THE E-4 CHURCH STRATEGY

In 2015 we launched the E-4 Church Strategy, based on Ephesians 4:11-16. This strategy brings pastors to two seminars, the IFCL followed by the ICOMP, and then up to two years of mentoring, as part of a small group.

TWENTY YEARS LATER

Now, twenty years after the founding of ITEM (how time flies!), we are involved in 15 African countries, India, and the Dominican Republic with seminars and mentoring taking place. We have full-time missionaries, Jim, and Amber Glasscock, in Uganda. The number of pastors and educators assisting us as ITEM Associate Trainers continues to grow. There are national pastors meeting with mentors and fellow pastors in mentoring groups all over Africa, encouraging one another and becoming examples, equippers, and expositors. In addition to our pastor-training ministry, our women's ministry is developing as is our outreach to the emerging generation in Africa through a ministry of apologetics.

A BLESSED FUTURE

As we look to the future, only God knows where this ministry will be five and ten years from now. But I know one thing, by God's grace, the future will see continued expansion in all of these areas.

CELEBRATE WITH US ON NOVEMBER 4!

We will be celebrating all of this at our 20th Anniversary Celebration Banquet on November 4 at the Oregon Zoo. We will be looking back at the past twenty years and looking forward to what is next. **Please mark this date on your calendar and join us on Saturday, November 4, at the Oregon Zoo, off Highway 26 in SW Portland.**

By His grace,



Steve Van Horn
Founder/President