

Fall 2021

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A Newsletter from The Institute of Biblical Leadership



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THE INSTITUTE
OF BIBLICAL
LEADERSHIP

because leaders who
honor God don't just
come out of nowhere

Straight Ahead!



1 Corinthians 15:58

Fulfilling the Purpose, Need, and Opportunity in the Majority World

IBL has served national leaders in the majority world since 1998, when Russ Lloyd led his first training conference for Vietnamese church leaders just north of Ho Chi Minh City. Since then, we have developed majority world leaders in Central and South America, East Africa, and Central and Southeast Asia. As COVID winds down in the months ahead, we anticipate a dramatic reopening of our international training efforts in 2022, doubling the number of people groups we currently serve.

The ultimate motivation for these efforts is core to Christianity and the overarching purposes of God. The Word became flesh to accomplish a specific mission: the redemption of man for God's

glory (John 1:1-16). This mission was in furtherance of God's single, overarching missionary purpose, first alluded to in Genesis 3:15 and explicitly stated for the first time in Genesis 12:1-3, in the calling of Abram. In these verses, we learn God accomplishes His redemptive purpose through a process of:

- Enlisting us into His activity (v1)
- Sovereignly promising to bless us personally (v2a)
- Overcoming the curse of man's sin and blessing others through our service (v2b; see also Gen 10-11)
- Sovereignly promising us His protection (v3a)
- Blessing all mankind through our service (v3b)

While Genesis 12 is a promise given specifically to Abram, it is given to us as well (see Hebrews 6:9-20 and Isaiah 61:1-3). This purpose is restated for the

Church in the Great Commission: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:18-20).

At IBL, we view our efforts to develop majority world leaders as a key link in the chain of God's redemptive purpose. By equipping national leaders, our efforts help establish a people who worship and serve God, so they can bring the gospel to another people, who can be established in Christ, worshiping and serving him, so they too can bring the gospel to another people... and so on.

Yet, importantly, we recognize the Great Commission is a mandate to be fulfilled through the local church. So, while IBL has a role to play in the Great Commission mandate, it must be fulfilled under the authority of local churches who partner with us. The local church must take the lead as they are led by the Holy Spirit to invest in another people group, with IBL coming alongside with our insights and expertise in developing God-honoring leaders who can effectively establish people in worship and service.

So, what are the key leadership needs in the majority world that, when met, will build strong links in the redemptive work of God?

God used a seven-year period in IBL's history, from 2005 to 2012, to help us understand the key needs of the majority world Church. During this season, God led us to many countries: Guatemala, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Kenya, Turkey, India, Vietnam, Thailand, and others; responding to individual requests for training, coaching, and consulting. While fulfilling those calls for assistance, we also sought to understand whether God had some ongoing work for us in the majority world. While each of these countries have unique people, histories and cultures, God highlighted for us some common challenges faced by majority world leaders around the globe.

First, there is a great need to clarify the practical, essential doctrines of the Christian faith. With little access to formal Bible training, most leaders in the majority world learn from whatever resources are readily available, resulting in profound doctrinal error and confused practice.

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Distance Mentoring of National Leaders

By: Derick Jarvis

We departed Kenya in December 2019, having successfully initiated our three-year Pastoral Training programs in Ruiru and Kijabe. Our plans then were to return four months later to continue this good work God had begun. At that point, we had no idea we would be hindered from stepping foot on Kenyan soil for more than two years. Due to COVID, we have now canceled three pastoral training conferences in Kenya, including one that was scheduled for September 2021. This latest training had to be canceled due to yet another resurgence and lock down orders in and around Nairobi. We know God is sovereign and we trust in Him, but it still pains us to know we won't be in-person with our Kenyan students until April 2022. However, there is a silver lining. God used the travel restrictions to highlight for us an important new opportunity to make a deeper, more extensive investment in our Kenyan brothers and sisters than we ever envisioned.

Background

I have served as a Ministry Executive with IBL for more than fourteen years, with responsibility

to assist God's leaders through IBL's training, coaching, consulting and counseling ministries. Of all the opportunities God has given me, one of the most precious is overseeing IBL's Pastoral Training Ministry in Kenya. Our work in Kenya began in 2012 with twenty-nine students and has now expanded to two locations and sixty-five pastors and other leaders. Through their churches, schools, and other ministries, these national leaders impact thousands of Kenyans throughout the country. It is a blessing to serve alongside Pastor Wilfred Githongo and Pastor Fred Mukumbu, our Coordinators in Kijabe and Ruiru, respectively. They have been called by God to develop and encourage pastors and leaders in the regions they serve.

One unique aspect of IBL's training program is to coach and mentor a subset of our students, those who sense a special call to develop other Kenyan leaders. We refer to these men as "Disciplers." We originally planned to invest in these individuals twice per year following each training conference.

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Second, there is a need to deeply instill personal spiritual disciplines and biblical leadership practices in the lives and ministries of God's leaders. In the majority world, there is minimal understanding of the leadership principles found in God's Word. Instead, leaders rely on common cultural norms which equate leadership with position, title, power, and money, resulting in a very fleshly form of leadership. This dynamic also exists here in the USA and other parts of the developed world.

Third, there is a need to encourage effective, Word-based, Spirit-led pastoral ministry. Cultural norms, not sound biblical exegesis and application, often drive personal morality and relationships within the Body of Christ. This tendency is magnified by culturally driven leadership practices in which leaders mandate behavioral conformance by fiat, resulting in a system of legalistic practices among Christians rather than Spirit-led growth.

Fourth, there is a need for national leaders to be the primary leaders accountable to Christ, developing self-sustaining, organically reproducible churches and ministries consistent with their own cultures. Too many Christian endeavors in the majority world have been

spearheaded by western culture, money, and leadership, inadvertently hindering these ministries from developing their "sea legs" so they can sustain themselves in an independent fashion, realizing enduring growth and impact for Christ.

Meeting these needs is central to fulfilling the Great Commission mandate in the majority world. The opportunity for eternal impact is great and compelling. For this reason, IBL partners with North American churches who have a Holy Spirit-led burden to invest in the leadership of a specific people group. Serving together, we labor to forge the next link in the redemptive chain God is constructing.

Dr. David Phelan
IBL President



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The Compelling Opportunity Before Us

By: *Richie Bean*

What can I say that would lock-in your attention? What could I tell you that would move your heart to partner with our church and IBL? I could speak to Christ's command in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). I could point out the need for our churches to develop strong partnerships with international mission efforts. However, I would rather tell you about the pastors and people we get to work with! I would tell you of a pastor and his wife sitting across the table from us with tears rolling down their faces as they detailed the challenges they have in shepherding their church. They have struggled to lead the different personalities among their members. They have met resistance when trying to implement any changes geared toward moving their membership forward in the Gospel. They have been confronted with an attitude in their congregation of, "you are a new pastor with all these new ideas, but we're just waiting for you to move on to another location like all our previous pastors." Isolated, they struggle to rise above a wide range of hindrances to continue faithfully serving God. And they are not the only ones who

experience these real, ever-present trials.

Let me tell you about another pastor that struggled mightily through COVID. Having minimal financial support, he lost his internet service during the pandemic. Think about how we in the States quickly adapted to online church services and Bible studies conducted via video-conferencing services. Yet this pastor, for a period of time, could not minister to his flock because he could not afford internet service, something that we take for granted here in the United States. He desired to be faithful, but he had no one to walk with him through those times or to encourage him as a leader. He had no one to encourage him that God is always faithful no matter what circumstances we walk through.

These are faithful men and women who have given their lives to bring the Gospel to their people. They view themselves as servants, considering their lives to be living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Their heart is that, by God's grace, the Gospel might move forward; and it has moved forward due to their faithfulness. Yet there

is still much to be done. As evangelistic missionary work moves forward, these pastors and their churches desperately need training and coaching in the areas of discipleship training and leadership development.

In the United States, we take for granted the resources we have at our disposal. We have a wide range of tools at our fingertips for leadership development, church strategies and discipleship. We have ready access to experienced trainers, coaches and consultants, like the men and women at IBL, who ask needed questions, provide wise counsel, and align leaders to biblical wisdom. But majority world pastors have very limited connections, resources, and opportunities.

My church in MN, Christ Community, recognizes the blessings we have from God's hand; and we have decided we aren't going to sit by comfortably and not assist the labors of these faithful men and women, our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, as they serve our Savior. We are going to stretch our missions budget to partner with IBL, laboring together to develop leaders in Ecuador and South America.

Christ Community Church has always used a threefold strategy when it comes to missions endeavors. First, we pray! We ask God to guide us, direct us, give us wisdom and discernment when it comes to the mission. Second,

we give! We give out of the joy of our heart so that the Gospel might be moved forward and strong disciples might be grown. We give sacrificially out of what God has granted us so others would have the opportunity to hear the Gospel or grow stronger in their faith. Third, we go! We have been called to spread the Gospel. This means getting out of my comfort zone. It means doing something that requires my time, effort, and energy. While any one of us might not be able to do all three of these, we understand that each of us has a responsibility to participate to the extent we can. We can all pray, we can all give, and some of us by the grace of God can go.

I am personally asking you to partner with IBL, and Christ Community in our international leader development efforts in Ecuador and South America. The opportunity that lays before us is simply amazing! To partner with these churches and pastors will be a massive blessing to them and to us. This is a real opportunity to receive the blessing of being told, "well done good and faithful servant!"

Richie Bean
IBL Partner



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However, as COVID developed into a pandemic and travel restrictions went up around the world, I began a practice of connecting with Pastors Wilfred and Fred every month via video calls to encourage them and pray with them. God used these precious times to spark an idea which has taken off in a dramatic way: utilizing video conferencing technology for regular mentoring sessions with our Disciplers. Through this Distance Mentoring format, we are engaging our Disciplers with much greater frequency, depth, and effectiveness than originally conceived. Amazingly, we probably would not have discovered this opportunity without the pandemic "forcing" us to see it.

Encouragement and Hope

The Distance Mentoring sessions have highlighted the importance of encouraging our students. Pastor Wilfred Githongo commented, *"Due to COVID, our students were greatly discouraged, but distance mentoring encourages them as it draws IBL closer to us."* Wilfred's assistant, Zack, added, *"The fellowship and devotional time together has been an encouragement to the pastors."*

Strengthening Bonds

Who can forget the "toilet paper panics" in the early days of the lock downs here in America, when we were given just a few short days to stock up on essentials? In Kenya, the lock downs were

immediate, issued without warning, and rigidly enforced. These steps brought immediate food shortages and hunger. The pastors we train struggled to provide for their families and the families under their care. Discouragement developed as the pandemic lengthened. The cancellation of the IBL training disconnected us from our students, who felt alone and left to fend for themselves. God has used the Distance Mentoring to remind the Kenyan Leaders of IBL's commitment and support. According to Wilfred, *"When they hear a mentoring session is coming it is giving them power for continuing. They feel IBL is still with them and still committed. These sessions show us the bond between IBL and the pastors is still strong."*

Reinforcement

The necessary cancellation of our training conferences has produced a significant gap in our students' learning process. With each cancellation, the training received back in December 2019 becomes more distant and less clear.

Training in majority world settings is always challenging. So much can be confused or lost due to translation issues, educational disconnects, and cultural dynamics. With the long gap in training sessions caused by the pandemic, all the previous learning was at risk of being lost. But the video conferencing technology is a powerful and effective mentoring tool with

small groups of leaders and is very effective in reinforcing and building upon previously received training.

Wilfred highlighted this dynamic for us: *"It is refreshing the students on what has already been done. It is continuing what the pastors are learning."*

With the ever-present challenges of language, varying education levels, and culture, the mentoring sessions can quickly devolve into ineffectiveness when the internet service is lagging or intermittent. Therefore, the sessions are purposefully kept simple. They are most effective when used to reinforce previously discussed concepts, truths, and skills. Each seven-hour session is built on previous training in three key areas: theology, ministry skills, and biblical leadership.

Practical Application

The mentoring sessions advance the Disciplers to the point of personal application. With less emphasis on training and more on coaching and mentoring, we come alongside the Disciplers, encouraging them to exercise their Bible study skills, to apply the theological truths they previously learned, and to practice biblical leadership. After each session the Disciplers recap for us the next steps they'll be taking in the weeks to come.

In one of our recent sessions, Pastor Fred shared these next steps: *"Following our mentoring session yesterday, we decided*

that we need to exercise three components to help us renew our hearts in reference to God. We agreed to meet every month for the purpose of prayer, reading/ studying the Word of God, and fellowship. Our first meeting was scheduled on 20 August 2021. This agreement with us won't be easy thus more prayers are needed."

Pastor Fred's group knows their commitment "won't be easy." Pastors in majority world settings face many challenges as they shepherd their churches. Poverty, illness, poor education, unreliable transportation, and the need to serve bi-vocationally are commonplace. Added to these normal life challenges, the past year brought floods, drought, locusts, and a life-threatening pandemic to Kenya. Even seasoned leaders can become disheartened by the magnitude of these varied trials. At IBL, we are thankful that during these days of adversity God is using our Distance Mentoring sessions to encourage, restore hope, and re-enforce IBL's bond with these dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Derick
Jarvis**

IBL Ministry Executive



Faithfully Advancing



Ephesians 4:14-16

Invest, Enlist, Release... Repeat

The most-often used Scripture that drives our philosophy of International Training is 2 Timothy 2:2. Our heartfelt desire is to labor alongside God's leaders in majority (developing) world countries in such a way that we invest in them, enlist them into service, and release them into ministry; specifically, the ministry of training other national leaders. To that end, our training has six important characteristics.

We are **intentional** in who we enlist in the training. We rely heavily on our National Coordinator to identify the men and women to participate in the training. We want our students to be mature, serious-minded, and proven participants in church leadership. They may be pastors, pastors' wives, deacons, or other significant church leaders. Whatever their official title or position, we want to ensure they have a heart to become the leader God intends them to be. Our training isn't for everyone, but for those who do receive our training, we do all we can to invest in them with intentionality.

Our time together with the students is very **interactive**. As we teach, we proactively engage our students in discussion. We want to be sure we are communicating appropriately and they are understanding the material as best as possible. But classroom participation is a small part of the total interaction we have with our students. As we enjoy chai or coffee with them on our breaks, IBL team members and our guest trainers (many of whom are seasoned pastors) engage in deep, personal interaction with our students. We listen, counsel, coach, and encourage them. Our heart is not simply to disseminate knowledge, but rather, we desire to build deep, lasting relationships with our students as we invest in their lives.

Our training is **intensive** in its curriculum. While we are not the only "team in town" when it comes to international training, we do believe there are very unique aspects to our approach. The material we've developed has been designed to be as deep and broad as possible in as reasonable a time as possible. Each class we offer is two hours in length. Throughout the three-year time frame of our training,

our students will receive twenty classes on theology, twenty classes on pastoral skills (with a heavy emphasis on Bible study and interpretation), and twenty classes on biblical leadership. We believe our students need to be given the essential tools necessary to be the leaders God desires them to be. In a world where leadership is all about position, power, title, and money, we want to offer our students the tools they need to be the humble, servant-leaders God desires, so they can be enlisted into effective, God-honoring service.

The relationship we have with our Disciples is an **intimate** relationship. After each week of classes, we ask four to six leaders-of-leaders to stay for two additional days of one-on-one mentoring. We invest an incredible amount of time and energy into these men. We get to know them on a deep, intimate level. We engage with them via zoom several other times during the year. We know these men and we enlist them into serving with us as we serve the larger group of students. These men are being trained to be the teachers and disciples of our students when we are not present in-country; in a real sense they are being developed to be our colleagues.

The effort put into our national Disciples is for the purpose of making our ministry as **impactful** as possible. Our training is designed for three sets of three years. In the first three years, the IBL team leads the training and invests in the lives of the Disciples (four to six leaders-of-leaders). In the second three-year period, the IBL team is partnering with our Disciples to do the training and preparing the

next round of leaders. In the final three years, we are ready to release our Disciples into their own ministry of training other nationals. By this time, there will be approximately thirty nationals developed as Disciples. This is where we see the greatest impact: national leaders confidently and competently training other nationals!

One final characteristic of our International Training: it is **interchangeable**. By this we mean we can take this model and replicate it in any number of locations. We are currently in discussion with a number of churches and ministries that desire to partner with IBL to train nationals around the world. This allows us to continually repeat the process of investing, enlisting, and releasing national leaders into ministry. If you would like to know more about how your church can partner with IBL to develop national leaders, please send me an email at (daved@iblministry.org).

Dr. Dave Deets

IBL Vice President
of Ministries





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Meanwhile, Here in the USA...

...we've been busier than ants at a church picnic!

Our consulting work with churches and ministries has flourished throughout the COVID pandemic and continues to expand virtually weekly. These cases involve long range ministry planning, organizational leadership planning, crisis response, conflict resolution, and more. We are grateful for these opportunities to serve in the trenches alongside godly leadership teams who desire to serve God faithfully and with excellence.

In addition, we are making good strides in developing our US Training initiatives. This year we have made significant progress in developing partnerships with a number of ministry organizations: a military chaplain's group, a church planting organization, a missions organization, and four bible colleges and seminaries. We are excited about these opportunities as they allow us to proactively connect with leaders already in the field or about to be in the field, and to invest in them biblical principles of leadership they can immediately put into practice, thereby avoiding some of the pitfalls faced by ministry leaders.

Coaching and counseling have continued at their normally brisk pace over the past several months. We are on schedule to end 2021 with the highest number of counseling cases in at least the past five years.

All of this increased workload can only be met by the strategic expansion of our team. We are currently planning to add one more individual to our team in November and are in discussion with another individual for early next year. Pray with us that the Lord would open the doors for additional staff and supply the necessary funds to support them.