

HEART FOR AFRICA
"TRANSFORMING BIBLICAL PREACHING ONE PASTOR AT A TIME"

DECEMBER 2020

"PRAYER & GOD'S WORD"

*"Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
for You are the God of my salvation;
on You I wait all the day."
Psalm 25:5*

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Prayer and God’s Word are inextricably connected as we just experienced in a 4-day leadership conference involving the ICM-Africa ministry team. We are blessed by faithful leaders the Lord has assembled to carry out the ministry vision. They are extremely gifted, humble, and confident Bible teachers, but somewhat unproven and untested in exercising the full scope of their leadership abilities. This was largely due to us thinking we had plenty of time to teach them these skills, but the Lord used our unplanned, COVID-induced, extended furlough to bring us much clarity in this regard. We then realized that if the Lord closed the door to us being here much longer, they could teach the classes but were not equipped to run the ministry.

We decided to have a leadership conference involving all of the ICM-Africa ministers—men and women. The goals were to worship the Lord and seek His guidance on the way forward. We wanted to follow the pattern set by Nehemiah, a great man of prayer, who passionately sought to hear from the Lord during trying national times. Four days were scheduled at the main campus in the Mt. Meru region, a perfect place for such an undertaking because there are no distractions. We invited all 26 of our college instructors, site directors, and Inductive Bible Study teachers.

“O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name.”
Nehemiah 1:11a

We were very blessed that every one of them came; several journeyed for a full day on a long bus ride. Each

seemed to have the same simple, straightforward goal: thank the Lord in a corporate setting for His faithfulness to the ministry and for His mercy and grace in bringing us all back together. As a result, the conference had the excitement and feel of a long-awaited family reunion. Stories were shared, relationships were renewed and strengthened, and hearts were refreshed as we poured out our thanks, gratitude and praises to the Lord each evening in some of the most amazing Christ-centered worship we have ever experienced.



Evening Worship

“The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.”
Lamentations 3:25

As we methodically worked through the whole book of Titus, we could see that this pastoral letter had great applicability to ICM Africa. *Good order and leadership is necessary within a ministry in order to have a good witness outside.* The leaders also met in small groups for prayer and discussion of specific applications from the text. We brought the full group back together to allow

each team to present their applications. This is where the seeds of future ministry transformation were sown!



1 of 5 small groups working on ideas

“A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”
Proverbs 16:9

Amazing results occurred on the last day as we began discussing plans for transforming the college and seminar programs. The Lord began answering the prayers of His people by giving the ministers keen spiritual insight. They were daring and bold in their proposals for enhancing ministry sustainability. Plans for shifting more of the cost burden to students were discussed and implementation plans developed. The college students will be required to invest in their own development by assuming one-third of the total cost for each program. Pastor Silas, our Tanzanian director, had already tried out some of these ideas in our absence with great success. Now we

received a corporate buy-in and commitment from the whole team, and we’ve just begun our first class under these new guidelines. God is good!



Thanking God together

In addition, a large part of the massive administration burden for these programs was taken on by several of the staff. We have 21 college classes going on at any given time, and we conduct 30-40 men’s and women’s IBS seminars each month, all requiring student materials. What a relief for us to have some of this burden lifted! The cooperative spirit among the team was very uplifting. We all felt that the Lord had brought much good from the troubling COVID issue in preparing the hearts and minds of ICM Africa’s ministers for such a time as this! There is much work to be done next year to provide them a framework for handling the logistics, finances, scheduling, and administration of the ministry and then allowing them the opportunity to learn on the job. We pray we can make this leadership conference an annual for event for everyone to be refreshed and learn. Pray for all of us through this important transition.

Catch up on our personal journey through our website news, and find many more pictures there.
www.jimandjanicelaron.com

Pictures of the Month



Above: The Bible College instructors.

Right: The Women's Ministry Team

Inside: All IBS and college instructors, as well as site directors

Front Cover:
The Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (John 5)

(Photo credit:
J. Larson)



CONTRIBUTIONS PAYABLE & MAILED TO:

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On-line giving available through our website



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PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray for us to demonstrate grace and patience with the staff as they step into leadership roles and duties which do not come easy to them. Mistakes will be made. May the Lord give us wisdom to lead them.
- PTL that diploma and certificate classes went well in November. The staff did a good job trying to put into practice what they learned just 2 weeks earlier.
- Pray for a graduation on Dec 11 in Mwanza and for our safe travel to/from.
- We pray blessings on all of you as we remember the Lord's birth on Christmas, and we'll see some of you at the very end of the month in St Petersburg.