

2013 Annual Report for Eric Belz

1. **Your Ministry:** *Explain your ministry in one sentence for a lay person.*

My ministry is to train pastors and church leaders globally so they can study, obey and teach God's Word well, and to equip them to pass this training on to others.

2. **Strategic Value:** *Tell why your ministry is important or strategic and how it fits into the "big picture."*

This ministry is important and strategic because most pastors globally who are leading the majority world have no idea what to teach their people. In most cases they have received no formal training, so they pass on false teaching such as prosperity theology which hurts more than helps. The training we offer grounds them not only in the truths of Scripture, God revelation of Himself and His will for us in Christ, but it also gives them tools so that pastors can study and teach God's Word well. This will lead to healthy ministries based on the Word, God's kingdom will grow authentically, and disciples will be made of all nations (Matt.28:18-20), which is the "big picture." The series of nine workshops over three years we offer are effective for long-term change on a trajectory for exponential growth, and they are reproducible and sustainable because they are "owned" and driven by nationals.

3. **Scriptural Basis:** *Give one or two Scripture verses and explain how they undergird your ministry.*

Obviously there are MANY passages I could reference, but a couple which are fundamental for our ministry are Ezra's commitment as he "set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." (Ezra 7:10) We long for pastors and church leaders to grow strong spiritually by studying God's Word, and obeying it. The Bible is our foundation and what we go back to "so the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim.3:17). Beyond this, we are raising up movements of leaders who can preach the Word well, for it is our authority and is the substance of our message (2 Tim.4:1-5). Finally, we strive to equip leaders who will pass this training on to others, as Paul tells Timothy in 2 Tim.2:2. We desire that solid, expository preaching of the Word would be spread and multiplied far beyond those we personally can reach, to the glory of Christ by the work of His Spirit.

4. **Motivation:** *Why do you continue to do what you do?*

I cannot imagine a more fulfilling calling than to bring glory to God by equipping leaders to study, obey and teach the Word well. The needs are so profound globally and national leaders are so hungry for our training. God has shaped me in such a way to connect well cross-culturally with pastors and leaders, to develop them so they embrace the truths of Scripture, to empower them to obey His Word, and to release them so they preach His Word with truth and power, and train others to do the same. Pastors and leaders are coming to saving faith in Christ, congregations are being transformed, authentic Bible-preaching movements are spreading, and

God is being exalted. What could be more rewarding? The work is challenging and eternally significant, and I'm grateful to be a part of what God is doing.

5. **Priorities:** *How do you decide what ministry activities to do and what not to do?*
This is a real challenge. There are so many opportunities globally for us to give this training to leaders, and we want to be most strategic and yet guard against spreading ourselves too thin. For this reason, in addition to training pastors overseas, we also train pastors and church leaders in the US, so they can be mobilized to train leaders globally. In this way, we can reach far more than just our team members could. Also, we work as part of a team (the Global Equipping Team in ReachGlobal / EFCA) to determine where the fields are the "whitest" and leaders are the most ready and in need of our training. All is brought before the throne of God and we submit to the Spirit's guidance.

6. **Successes and Challenges (Results):** *What are some of the encouragements you've seen this past year and what are some challenges?*

Successes - I have been encouraged in many areas this year.

- A. Team - I am a part of a very healthy, mature team of like-minded missionaries who are passionate about God being glorified and His kingdom growing. As our vision statement says, we do this "by equipping reproducing leaders globally for kingdom transformation and expansion." It is a joy to serve along with them.
- B. US pastors - I've also been encouraged to see the receptivity of our Bible training among US pastors, many of whom are motivated to help train overseas.
- C. Indigenous church transformation - We occasionally hear from church members of the pastors we train who share about the transformation that has occurred in their pastor's preaching and ministry since beginning our course. As one woman shared, "Our pastor used to just tell us what he thought; now he preaches what the Bible says." This coupled with the glowing testimony of pastors themselves that they now know God and His Word in a way they never did before – these truths are inspiring. Of course, leading pastors, church leaders and members to faith in Christ is always a highlight and great privilege.
- D. Reproduction - But the deepest encouragement is not what we hear from people, but what we see in their lives. Pastors not only embrace and implement this training, but they are passionately passing it on to others they know. The things we most value, we share with others. So the fact that nearly every pastor I regularly work with overseas (about 55 pastors, which will be increasing in 2014) is training other groups of pastors and church leaders in their region (for example, over 150 are being trained in Uganda, 250 in Tanzania). Although I continue to assist with funding the first generation trainings, there is a strong sense of ownership by participants as they prepare for trainings, raise funds, and pass trainings on.

Challenges – Some of the difficulties we have faced are:

- A. Overcommitting – There are far more venues waiting to be launched than we are able to follow through to completion, and so we guard against over commitment.
- B. Funding – Indigenous pastors have very little money, struggling to feed their families much less pay for first or second generation trainings. While trying to guard against unhealthy dependency upon western funds, we try to guide them to locally-driven solutions.

7. **Growth:** *How are you growing and what are you learning from God and Scripture?*

As I prepare for and deliver messages from the Word, growth is inevitable. For example, for four weeks prior to my recent trip to India and East Africa I prepared lessons from the Word, and then in 24 days on the trip I delivered over 35 messages either in churches or to classes of pastors, and I learned much through this time about God's person and work in books like Genesis, Psalms and Mark. I am again seeing that this ministry is not about me, but it is all about God, His Word, and empowering others to handle His Word well (2 Tim.2:15). His grace is sufficient to do marvelous works through my weakness, which again leads me to praise Him that He is at the center of all we do (2 Cor.12:9). As I prepare for and give messages, I am finding my own exegetical and homiletical skills are improving as I apply the tools we teach to pastors. One area I must continue to grow is that when I am at home, I must make it a priority to engage deliberately with my family rather than being consumed with the demands of work. Our team leader holds me accountable, and I'm grateful for that. I believe I'm also growing in my ability to work cross-culturally with a variety of people from diverse backgrounds, and am learning better how to "*equip the saints for the work of ministry.*" (Eph.4:12)

8. **Future:** *What ministry goals and plans do you have for the next year?*

In our team, I am directing all trainings in Central and East Africa, and so I am pouring myself into growing our training ministry especially in these regions. By God's grace, I plan to launch a new training venue of nine workshops in Kigali, Rwanda. I am so very excited because after launching this venue, I will hand it off to our first team of US pastors who will lead the trainings through to completion. Also, I will be exploring the next location to launch, and am considering Congo, Sudan and Ethiopia as options. I will be doing about 5-6 training trips internationally in 2014, and also several other trainings, mission conferences and meetings in the US. I hope to develop a team of US-based pastor-trainers for Africa allowing me to launch new locations and support our existing ones in Uganda and Tanzania. I will also continue coaching pastors in each of our international training venues, encouraging them to pass the trainings on to others. I will also be available to our team members for assistance in their global trainings as well as various team tasks.

9. **Finances:** *What are your financial needs to accomplish your ministry?*

We are very thankful for the many partners, both individuals and churches, who give sacrificially so we can continue training pastors internationally. We cherish the partnerships we share, and pray they continue long into the future.

Two areas of financial need are:

- 1) We have recently lost about \$2200/mo. of support from a few individuals and a church, all for understandable reasons, and so we are trying to make up this deficit.
- 2) The pastors we train have many financial needs, and so where the Spirit and wisdom guide us, we try to help in training costs, which comes from my ministry account. Please join us in prayer that God will provide resources in these areas.

10. Prayer Requests: *What are your biggest ongoing prayer requests?*

Personally, we would continue to ask for prayer for complete healing for Holly. She is most certainly making improvement, but still has a ways to go before she is fully recovered. We have recently moved to the Olympia area in WA for a couple reasons. One is because housing is far less expensive here than in CA, and the other is that we are now close to Holly's family who can offer her support while I am away at trainings. It is working out very well, and we are thankful for God's provision. Since I travel quite a bit, please pray that the family will not just survive but will thrive while I'm away, that the kids will form good, healthy friendships and that we will stay connected as a family even though we are apart.

In ministry, please pray for wisdom in launching new training venues and God's Spirit and energy in continuing with existing ones. Pray for participants to complete pre-assignments before the trainings, and then to pass the training on to other pastors and leaders after the trainings. Praise God with us for the wonderful work He has been doing, and we eagerly anticipate and depend upon His continued activity.

Submitted with appreciation for our supporters and gratitude to our Almighty God.

Eric R. Bell

