



The Christmas season is officially here. We just celebrated Thanksgiving and now whether we like it or not, it's time to get ready to celebrate again. Christmas movies are playing across several channels and the music of the season, both sacred and silly, is playing almost nonstop. This is my favorite time of the year. Not because of the chill in the air or the snow and ice or the decorations and gifts, but rather it's my favorite because we remember that Immanuel, God with us, has come.

One of the things I really enjoy is watching one of the many adaptations of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. It's the story of Ebenezer Scrooge who has become so obsessed with success that he has missed the point of life and the spirit of Christmas. On Christmas Eve, through a series of intense dreams, Scrooge encounters his past, present, and future. In reviewing his past, he looks back with regret at the decisions he made that have resulted in making him who he is. The present reveals to him, that despite his business success, others view him with scorn and pity. In the future he wrestles with his mortality and wonders if it's possible to change. He awakens on Christmas morning a new man. Scrooge, a stingy and bitter old man, has now become a joyful, generous new person.

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Why? Why did I do that? Why did that happen? Why didn't God do what I asked him to do?

How? How could this happen? How am I going to get through this? How can God be silent right now?

What? What will I do? What's going to happen to me? What can I do to make this better?

The prophet, Jeremiah, walked through a similar situation. He had been called by God to be a prophet. He had prophesied everything God had spoken to him. He had endured incredible suffering at the hands of those he was sent to warn. Through it all God had protected him.

Now, Jeremiah found himself in a dark, desperate place. Everything he had prophesied had come to pass. The people had been carried off in captivity to Babylon. Jerusalem was in ruins.

Updated School of Practical Ministry

As you may recall, we have been revising the School of Practical Ministry (SOPM) curriculum to make it even stronger and more fruitful. These changes are the result of things we have learned throughout the past 14 years of teaching this material.

We have added some significant elements, removed some material and made other adjustments. Now we are pleased to share with you that except for some minor tweaks, the revisions are complete. We believe the Lord has faithfully guided us through this process and are excited to soon be teaching this updated SOPM program to pastors and church leaders in developing nations, where the need remains extremely high.

The revised School of Practical Ministry is comprised of three main Sections with seven Learning Modules. In addition, students must also complete three

Listed below is a snapshot of the updated SOPM program:

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Module 1: Examining Biblical Principles

Module 2: Understanding the Bible

Module 3: Exploring Church History

ANSWERING THE CALL

Module 4: Experiencing the Holy Spirit

Module 5: Discovering Spiritual Gifts

SERVING THE KINGDOM

Module 6: Developing Leadership Essentials

Module 7: Communicating the Gospel

Thanks to your prayers and support, over 1,300 men and women have already been eternally impacted by enrolling in the SOPM program. Looking forward, we anticipate thousands more pastors and church leaders will soon have their first opportunity to experience formal Biblical training through the School of Practical Ministry.

As you know, Evangel does not charge students in developing nations for this training. However, there is a cost involved. All of this is only possible because you choose to invest in the lives of these men and women!

THANK YOU for helping to make this a reality in their lives!

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The temple was destroyed. Nothing was left. He describes his situation as almost hopeless. He says he is suffering physically, emotionally, and even spiritually. God isn't answering his prayers and he feels isolated. He doesn't understand and he is questioning God.

Despite experiencing all of this, Jeremiah is still able to make the declaration of his trust in God. *Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.* (Lam. 3:21-23) By remembering the goodness of God, hope rose up in Jeremiah. The despair and darkness fled and were replaced by joy and confidence.

During this holiday season when we think about our past, present, and future we can share in the same joy and confidence that Jeremiah experienced. That can happen because of who Jesus is. He's not just a baby in the stable in Bethlehem. He is Almighty God. He declared it to the Apostle John in his vision. *I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One.* (Rev. 1:8) He was present at the beginning and will be present at the end. He's the One who has always been, is present now, and will be present in the future. Because of His birth, life, death, and resurrection He's at work redeeming our past, present and future. Even if we can't see it right now, we can have the confidence that He's working. That's the message of Christmas.

Lord, thank you that You came to earth to live and walk among us. Thank you that You died and were resurrected so that we can be reconciled to God. Thank you for Your marvelous presence that's always with us. Thank you that You are the beginning and the end. Thank you that You are Almighty God and that nothing in our past, present or future is beyond Your ability to redeem. We ask that during this Christmas season, like Jeremiah, You would cause hope and joy to rise up in us. May we experience afresh Your faithfulness that knows no boundaries. Let it be so Lord Jesus! Amen.

On behalf of the entire Evangel family I want to wish you and your family a most joyous and blessed Christmas season and pray that the New Year will be your best ever.

Grace & Peace,



Bob Reichard, III
President

Did You Know....

- Evangel has trained over 1,300 pastors and leaders in 7 developing countries since 2009
- More than 2,000 churches have been started by graduates of the School of Practical Ministry (SOPM)
- That those SOPM graduates have created more than 4,000 community programs in the areas of :
Agriculture, Aids/HIV help, Education, Economic Development and more

(Approximate numbers based on information provided by SOPM graduates)



Dessert Banquet



For the first time since 2019, we were thrilled to again host an in-person Dessert Banquet in October. This annual event provides an opportunity to meet with friends and supporters as we fellowship around delicious desserts and inspirational music and messages. All of this is designed to help raise awareness and needed funds for training the next generation of pastors and church leaders in developing nations through Evangel's School of Practical Ministry.

This year's theme "Entrust", was taken from II Tim. 2:2 "*and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*" This theme perfectly captures the heart of Evangel's international training. We are not only instructing young pastors who will pass on to others what they have learned, but Evangel is also committed to equipping and certifying indigenous instructors who will faithfully continue teaching when we are not present.

We were honored to have Rev. Frank Kelly, Jr. as our main speaker. He is an Evangel Seminary graduate and is currently the senior pastor at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Northern, Va. Rev. Kelly shared his personal testimony of the impact Evangel has had in his life. He passionately spoke about the way Evangel continues to give away what has been entrusted to them by the Lord, both locally, nationally and internationally. He then reminded us that Evangel has been faithful to live out Eph. 4:12 "equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up."



Additional highlights included a short question and answer session with Bob on the "hot seat" as Tom asked him probing questions to help provide the audience with further insight into the overall work of Evangel. Rounding out the evening we were all ministered to through special music sung by Sylvia Mehegan and Donnie Mix.



In late summer, the Lord began speaking to us about the need for more flexibility in the way we train others. As a result, Evangel made a conscious decision to add an additional layer to our teaching/training resources. In a relatively short period of time, we developed a new program called Growth Points, providing an additional training option both here in the U.S. and in developing nations.

Growth Points offers students the opportunity to study three of the seven Learning Modules found in the updated SOPM curriculum; Understanding the Bible, Experiencing the Holy Spirit and Developing Leadership Essentials. (*see Updated SOPM article on p.2*) Growth Points is designed to be taught one evening a week for ten weeks here in the U.S. In developing nations, it can be taught as time permits, in extremely remote areas where hosting a full SOPM program will not work. While this new option opens up opportunities that we have not previously had, the School of Practical Ministry continues to be the primary focus of the international training Evangel provides.

Our first opportunity to teach the new Growth Points material was this fall, with students representing various ages and backgrounds. The class went so well that we are currently considering holding a new class beginning in early 2022. If you would like to join us for this exciting new training, which may also include a remote learning option, we would love to have you. If you would like additional information, please mark that option on the enclosed response card along with an email address and return it.