

THE EVANGEL VOICE

Winter 2024



The past 12 months have been a year where the Lord gave us wonderful opportunities to experience many “first time” events with the School of Practical Ministry (SOPM). Here are some highlights:

Translation: The translation of the SOPM notebook into Swahili is in the process of being completed. Soon it will go through a proof reading process that should be completed by January. This will provide brand new opportunities for pastors in Kenya as well as Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda to take the SOPM in one of their native languages.

Liberia: For the very first time, we held a School of Practical Ministry in Liberia on the west coast of Africa. The School was conducted in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, where 45 pastors and church leaders came together for an intensive two week training. (see related article on p. 4)

Certified Instructors in Kenya: This nation has been on our heart since we first went there in 2009 to teach the SOPM program. If you read the *Evangel Voice* regularly, you know it took us 14 years before we returned to Kenya in 2023. This year, we had the privilege of certifying two indigenous Kenyan pastors as SOPM instructors, who will be men we rely on to teach the program in that nation going forward.

4 SOPM Schools held in 2024: For the first time ever, by God’s grace, there were 4 different Schools of Practical Ministry conducted in 3 nations this year (Cameroon, Liberia and Kenya). This allowed us to see approx. 170 pastors and church leaders trained through this powerful ministry. These men and women have gone back to their homes and by all reports are having a significant impact in their churches and communities.

None of this would have occurred without the generous support of our ministry partners. Thank you from the depth of our hearts for helping to make 2024 a year to remember!

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Evangel Welcomes Our 3rd President

For only the 3rd time in Evangel's 42 years of ministry, Evangel Seminary has a new President. We are delighted to announce that Stephen Sill has been named the new President of Evangel. Steve is a graduate of the Seminary and he has served on the Board of Trustees since 2016. You may also recall that in September of 2023, Steve was named interim President by the Board of Trustees of Evangel.

Over the next 12 months, Steve functioned with excellence as the interim President. His passion for the work and ministry of Evangel was evident to all and his vision for the future has been clear and focused. At the September Board of Trustee meeting, there was unanimous consent to remove the "interim" status for Steve and invite him to become the next President of Evangel, which he joyously accepted. Welcome Steve!



Steve taking part in the SOPM Kenya 2024

FALL BANQUET - A SUCCESS

With weeks of prayer, planning and preparation completed, Evangel Seminary welcomed around 70 people to their annual fall Banquet on Thur. evening Oct. 24th. There truly was an atmosphere of joy and expectancy as the evening got underway. Our theme for this year's Banquet was "Abundance", taken from Psalm 1:3.



A wonderful array of delicious desserts was laid out along with an amazing Charcuterie Board of fruits, nuts, cheeses, meats and crackers. All of this was lovingly prepared and donated by some amazing people to numerous too mention, but we are extraordinarily grateful for each of them.

After enjoying wonderful food and fellowship, we all came together to worship the Lord, led by Sylvia Mehegan and Donnie Mix. This beautiful time helped set the atmosphere for the remainder of the evening. Steve Sill, president of Evangel Seminary shared his testimony of being apprehended by the Lord as a young college student and immediately set free from bondages that had held him captive for many years. Later, he enrolled in Evangel Seminary and graduated with a Master in Theology degree.

All of this set the stage for our guest speaker, Rev. John Kisamwa, who is also our ministry partner in Kenya. John and his wife Habona were in the U.S. and he graciously agreed to come share his heart for the training of pastors and church leaders through Evangel's School of Practical Ministry.

Although this type of training has always been a passion for John, at this season of life it has become a primary focus for him. From his days serving as a vice president for YWAM, in charge of the continent of Africa, John saw the constant need for discipleship and training. He continues to maintain strong friendships and relationships throughout Kenya and other African countries from that time in his life, so we are extremely grateful to partner with him in this great undertaking.





John shared powerful testimonies of men and women who have already gone through the SOPM program in Kenya. The impact of the program on their lives and the way they have been motivated to minister to their churches and communities is inspiring. P.3

If you were unable to attend the Banquet, please scan the QR code below with your cell phone to watch the short video we premiered at the Banquet of the August SOPM in Kenya. (You can also visit: www.ets.edu and click or tap on the connections tab to see the video or read testimonies from 3 students.) Those attending the Banquet were encouraged and blessed and we believe you will be as well.



QR Code for Video

Evangel's Vision for 2025

As we shared in the article "A Year of Firsts" p. 1, this year has been very full and very fruitful. We are thankful for the opportunities the Lord has provided for Evangel to make an even greater impact with the School of Practical Ministry (SOPM) in developing nations than we have in any previous 12 month period of time over the past 15 years.

During the past year, the Evangel Board of Trustees has felt the Lord was moving this ministry into a time of acceleration. Looking ahead to 2025, we see the very real possibility of exponential growth occurring in the SOPM international ministry. As you might imagine, plans are still be formalized for next year, but here is what we are currently seeing:

In Kenya, the government is trying to implement a law that will require all pastors to have a certificate or diploma showing they have had some type of formal theological training. If this bill actually becomes law, it will affect thousands of pastors who have no formal training and little hope of ever receiving any.

- With that backdrop, plans are underway right now to potentially train as many as 200 pastors through the School of Practical Ministry on the coast of Kenya in the first 3-4 months of the new year. We would do this by training around 65 pastors per month, holding 3 consecutive SOPM programs in a 90 day period of time.

In addition, plans are also being made to hold an SOPM program in northwest Kenya during the summer and possibly have another School of Practical Ministry in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. If those plans all fall into place, we could have as many as 5 SOPM classes in Kenya alone in 2025.

- Cameroon is already planning to hold at least 2 SOPM classes next year, one will be held at the end of February and beginning of March with a second class likely held in the summer months.
- Finally, our ministry partner in Sierra Leone, (who sponsored the School of Practical Ministry in Liberia this year) will be looking at holding an SOPM class next year in either Sierra Leone, Liberia or Guinea. **Conservatively we could end up training around 400 pastors and church leaders through 7-8 SOPM classes over the next 12 months.** That would be an amazing opportunity to impact the lives of an unprecedented number of pastors in these developing nations.

While we hold all of this in prayer and with an open hand, we realize that the resources needed to help this become a reality are significant. [Would you pray about being a part of this amazing opportunity with a generous year-end gift to E.T.S. helping us to say YES to the next generation of pastors and church leaders who will attend all of these Schools.](#)

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Evangel's Final School of Practical Ministry in 2024



Evangel's final School of Practical Ministry (SOPM) for the year was also our first SOPM in the west African nation of Liberia. From Nov. 1st – 15th we had the great privilege of taking 45 pastors and church leaders through this life changing School.

Liberia is one of the poorest nations in Africa and they desperately need an encounter with the living Christ.

Because our ministry partner in neighboring Sierra Leone had planted a church in Liberia, the pastor of that church was able to use his connections to reach out to pastors in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, to invite them to this life changing training opportunity.

These pastors and church leaders came together for 2 weeks to go



through the 7 Learning Modules

and 3 Learning Projects that comprise the School of Practical Ministry. Steve Sill, President of Evangel, and Mark Matney, a graduate of Evangel Seminary, went to Liberia from the U.S. and were joined by indigenous certified instructors from Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia to both teach and encourage these men and women.



By all accounts the School was an enormous success as the students studied the Word of God together and experienced their first opportunity to receive solid formal Biblical training. Below is

SOPM Graduation Nov 15, 2024

a wonderful synopsis from Mark, giving a first-hand account of the fruit of this Liberian SOPM:

This was a school of PRACTICAL Ministry, which means that we did not simply study facts about God or ministry. Instead, we learned how to take the knowledge we gained on the mountain top and apply it to our personal lives and ministries.

This was a class to be proud of. The students devoted themselves to attending twelve days of classes, writing three project papers, a day of fasting, an extended time of prayer, and putting their families, ministries and jobs on hold. They also organized an intercessory prayer team and a choir that wrote and performed an SOPM theme song for the graduation. This team of students learned, laughed, cried, prayed and worshiped together. The students and instructors also developed new friendships that provide fresh ministry opportunities (for the future).

We would be grateful if you would prayerfully consider a special year-end gift to Evangel's, School of Practical Ministry program . WE DO NOT CHARGE A FEE for pastors to take this life-changing class. Therefore, we need to raise all of the funds for this foundational Biblical training here in the U.S. Below are some specific areas you can help support for the coming year:

- A) Sponsor a pastor for the SOPM in 2025 : \$450 (3 pastors) \$300 (2 pastors) \$150 00 (1 pastor) \$_____ Other
- B) SOPM Translation into Swahili (see p.1): \$300 \$200 \$100 \$_____ Other
- C) Printing the SOPM Manual for each pastor (\$10): \$300 (30 manuals) \$200 (20 manuals) \$100 (10 manuals) \$_____ Other

To make a gift, you can send a check to Evangel Seminary • 36 Southgate Ct. Suite 201 • Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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